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THE BROTHERS FOWLER

by George Dangerfield

"In winter when the fields are white,
I sing this song for your delight—

only I don't sing it," he added, as an explanation.

"I see you don't," said Alice.

"If you can *see* whether I'm singing or not, you've sharper eyes than most," Humpty Dumpty remarked severely. Alice was silent.

"There's nothing like eating hay when you're faint," he remarked to her, as he munched away.

"I should think throwing cold water over you would be better," Alice suggested, "—or some sal-volatile."

"I didn't say there was nothing *better*," the King replied. "I said there was nothing *like* it." Which Alice did not venture to deny.

—*Alice Through the Looking Glass.*

I FIRST became acquainted with the Brothers Fowler in my third year at Oxford. My tutor was an authority—by repute—on Elisabethan obscenity, and a first-rate editor: his chief merit as a teacher lay in the fact that he sometimes made remarks *sotto voce*, and that those remarks were always worth listening for. He told me to buy *The King's English*: it was the best thing of its kind, he said; and confided to a tea-cup he was holding at the time that its quotations and comments might amuse me. "They are unique", he told the tea-cup. I remember now how quickly I forgot the soundness of *The King's English* in the delights of its quotation and comment, reading for pleasure where I should have been digging for profit. First impressions last longest. I have come to recognize the great importance of that book, and have long acknowledged myself to be heavily in the Fowlers' debt. But it is a debt for pleasure first, and for profit second.

I know nothing more about them than their nationality, which is English, and their names—H. W. and F. G. Fowler; I know that F. G., the younger brother, died of tuberculosis in 1918; and that the elder is still alive, a little old gentleman of singular charm. And that is all. But I hold the romantic faith "which is contrary to reason and against the argument of our proper senses" that books and their authors have

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entirely separate lives—a romantic faith because it supposes a book to have a personality, and experiences, and a destiny of its own; because it supposes a room full of books to be a room full of something more than reading matter; and because there is absolutely no valid critical defense of it. But may I indulge this faith so far as to say that the two books I am about to discuss are so full of surprise, enchantment and adventure; are so stirring with a strange creative vigour; that to preface them with another kind of biography altogether would savour of curiosity and might easily end in disorder?

The brothers made a translation of Lucian together; they compiled the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* together; together they wrote *The King's English*,* and outlined *The Dictionary Of Modern English Usage*,† which the elder brother went on to write alone. And I have two books§ on my desk now—two small volumes of essays which the elder brother wrote when he was still unknown and expected to remain so. I only heard of these two books lately and entertained great hopes of them. Nothing would have been more pleasant than to find them filled with masterpieces, if not undiscovered at least unsung. But no, they contain a sort of musing philosophy—too contented to be good philosophy, too complacent to be good prose. Those who have a taste for philosophy in shirt sleeves and scholarship in carpet slippers may find them well enough: there is the single objection to them that they are quite unworthy of a gentleman who has become unique in modern English letters.

Except in one instance. There is an essay in *Some Comparative Values* called *Matter And Manner*. Unlike the rest, it occupies a strategic corner of that vast and rich field—the proper use of the English language—where Mr. Fowler has now established himself as a thinker and writer of peculiar excellence. It presents and settles the differences between Materialists and Stylists, between those who say that style is an inseparable attribute of matter and those who say that style is an entity. It is written with the sweetest reason and not without authority, and it is worth a place in any ambitious anthology of critical prose. But there is one sentence in particular which is, as it were, the key to a strange and adventurous world—a world which we enter with all the assurance of maturity and which, as we proceed in it will treat us very much as the Wonderland and the Looking Glass treated Alice. She was always being told to think before she spoke and not to speak unless she had something worth saying. And there will be occasion upon occasion through these two books when we shall be treated just as Alice was; and on those occasions we too shall be silent.

II

"The virtues of good style", says Mr. Fowler in *Matter And Manner*, "are more negative than positive. The man who knows what to avoid is already the owner of style." Only upon such an understanding could a book like *The King's English* have been written, a book which is an accurate chart of style, with all the shoals and reefs carefully marked and liberally sprinkled with wrecks, and all the fair roads and channels uncoloured and unadorned. Its preface offers very much the same statement, only in more guarded language: "Since the positive literary virtues are not to be taught by brief quotation, nor otherwise attained than by

* *The King's English*, by H. W. and F. G. Fowler. Oxford University Press.

† *The Dictionary Of Modern English Usage*, by H. W. Fowler. Oxford University Press.

§ *Some Comparative Values*, by H. W. Fowler. Blackwell; and *If Wishes Were Horses*, by H. W. Fowler. George Allen & Unwin.

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improving the gifts of nature with wide or careful reading, the examples collected have had to be examples of the bad and not of the good." An essential qualification; for no man should be persuaded that he can learn to write simply by knowing what to avoid; he must have the gift of writing first, however meagre. Otherwise, with the knowledge of a thousand and one pits yawning for him, he will scarcely dare to set foot out of doors; and if he does he will walk stiffly, a very offense to nature.

The book starts with a reassuring simplicity:

> Any one who wishes to become a good writer should endeavour, before he allows himself to be tempted by the more showy qualities, to be direct, simple, brief, vigorous, and lucid.

But it is not long before one comes face to face with this:

> Prefer the familiar word to the far-fetched.
>
> "Buttercups made a sunlight of their own, and in the shelter of scattered coppices the pale *wind-flowers* still dreamed in whiteness.
>
> —E. F. Benson."

We all know what an anemone is: whether we know what a *wind-flower* is, unless we happen to be Greek scholars, is quite doubtful.

"How vainly men themselves amaze to win the palm, the oak, or bays." Here let him pause and think, who, not having the gift of reading, will never learn to write. For in this comment there lurks an alien ironical spirit, occupying itself in a place just a little beyond his vision, a spirit which is diametrically opposed to the correspondence course, the composition book, and the methodical grammar. *The King's English* can help a writer, but what has kept it and will keep it alive is the fact that it was written for the delight and edification of good readers as well, whether they are writers or not. It is more than a guide to correct English—it is a work of art.

But how can a book which was merely intended to go one better than the composition book and the grammar be a work of art? At this point I can see Mr. Fowler, perversely seated on the stool of grammar, coming back at me with his *Ut puto deus fio*. Indeed, I am not so blind that I cannot see the brothers' burning eagerness to rid the language of its worst abuses, nor so insensitive that I do not respond to it. But none the less, Mr. Fowler, your book is a work of art because you and your brother had a fundamental preoccupation, of which I think you must be well aware. I call it preoccupation and it is the artist's preoccupation—with "I create", not with "I explain".

However that may be, this book has enjoyed a twenty-five years' reputation for being the most useful work of its kind and it would be as well to describe its contents. It is in two parts, the first containing four chapters—Vocabulary, Syntax, Airs and Graces, and Punctuation; the second containing a number of shorter chapters on quotation, euphony, meaning, and so forth. It dispenses with elementary rules and fabricated examples, and many of its worst blunders have an eminent name attached to them. It is marked above everything else with the quality of acute perception; not one of our pet mistakes can have escaped its authors' eyes or survived their analysis; and those who maintain that taste and style continue to exist only because they are sometimes affronted may have reason to change their mind before they have read very far. But even then it should be a matter of the utmost difficulty to make Syntax and Punctuation readable as well as useful chapters. Syntax we feel to be an exercise, like Ovidian elegiacs—something which belongs to the ink-stain and

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tear-blot stage of existence. Punctuation has a mechanical sound, and we know of venerable literature which has not been robbed of its immortality, even though "the printer had enough to answer for in false pointings". How then have these two chapters been made readable, exciting, memorable? For they are no less than that; and whatever power has lightened their heaviness can be felt even more clearly through the rest of the book. Shall we call that power a subtlety of perception and analysis—a phrase which covers, but not uncovers, a multitude of virtues? Or shall we say that the Fowlers have the gift of Manner?

Manner, we are told, should be according to Matter; and, leaving all the fascinating complexities of that argument, we may suppose that if the manner is good it is a good matter that called it out. Now the matter of *The King's English* could be described in many different ways. The grammarian and the philologist would each have his different piece to say, and let me add in haste that it would be a far more valuable and illuminating piece than mine. I am no specialist, and for lack of a technical equipment (otherwise I should certainly be kicking up my share of dust in the famous grammarians' cockpit of *should* and *would*) I must describe it in these terms—in terms of ordinary and extraordinary futility, ordinary and extraordinary adventure, rhetoric, and cruelty.

Ordinary futility is just the mass effect of a certain kind of quotation, usually from the correspondence columns of the daily newspapers.

" 'Oxoniensis' approaches them with courage, his thoughts are expressed in plain, unmistakable language, *howbeit* with the touch of a master hand.—*Daily Telegraph*."

"By all means let us have bright, hearty, and very *reverend* services.—*Daily Telegraph*."

It does not take many of these to conjure up the drab spirit of innumerable dead controversies and dead enthusiasms or to epitomize all that hideous and wasteful human endeavour which we call *writing*. Any grammar book which quotes extensively, if we read it in the wrong mood, will give us an impression of this immense futility, and it is nothing to the Fowlers' credit that theirs does the same. But extraordinary futility is something that only those who are specially endowed can bring to light.

"If Mr. Chamberlain has been injured by the fact that till now Mr. Balfour has clung to him, Mr. Balfour has been equally injured by the fact that Mr. Chamberlain has persistently locked his arm in that of the Prime Minister.—*Spectator*."

Elegant variation is the last thing we should expect here. For what is the writer's principle object? Clearly to emphasise the idea of reciprocity by the repetition of names and by their arrangement. Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Balfour; Mr. Balfour, Mr. Chamberlain. It is easy enough so far: "If Mr. Chamberlain has been injured by the persistent attachment of Mr. Balfour, Mr. Balfour has been equally injured by that of Mr. Chamberlain". But that is not all that is required: there is to be the graphic touch; arm is to be locked in arm. Now comes the difficulty: in whose arm are we to lock Mr. Chamberlain's? In "his"? In *"his"*? in "Mr. Balfour's"? in "that of the Prime Minister"? As the locking of arms is after all only an elegant variation for clinging, remodelling seems again to be the best way out of the difficulty.

As for ordinary adventure, that is something which any book on the English language ought to give us, because our ignorance is so dark and wretched that it would be an easy matter to throw light on it. The pleasant shock we receive from learning that

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"eke out" cannot be used with "existence" or that *nom de plume* is an English distortion of *nom de guerre*, is an ordinary, that is an expected, adventure. But this is what I mean by extraordinary adventure:

"The sordor and filths of nature, the sun shall dry up.—EMERSON."

As *candeo candor, ardeo ardor,* so—we are to understand—*sordeo sordor.* The Romans, however, never thought they needed the word, and it is a roundabout method first to present them with a new word and then to borrow it from them; for it will be observed that we have no living suffix—*or* in English, nor, if we had, anything nearer than sordid to attach it to.

"Her forehand drive, her most trenchant asset.—*Daily Mail.*"

Another case of resuscitation. *Trenchant* turns in its grave; and *asset*, ready to succumb under the violence of athletic reporters, has yet life enough to resent the imputation of a keen edge.

Arrière-pensée we have seen used, with comic intent but sad effect, for a bustle or dress-improver; and, with sad intent but comic effect, for an afterthought; it is better confined to its real meaning of an ulterior object, if indeed we cannot be content with our own language and use those words instead.

"Extraordinary", then, whether applied to futility or adventure, means "with comment"; it means that a shaft of clean light has been thrown upon the dust and tinsel of everyday language. And it means that, whenever that language vaunteth itself and is puffed up, the Fowlers have a weapon to prick it with—a weapon forged out of scholarship, irony, humour, and imagination.

By "Rhetoric" I mean the continuance in a subject more to gratify the reader than to increase his knowledge. This, of course, could almost equally well be passed off as a desire to give a decent body to instruction—a desire which distinguishes a good teacher from a dull one. In any case, one example may show what I have in mind. Writing of the abuse of the word "mutual", the Fowlers make it abundantly clear that that mutual "implies an action or relation between two or more persons or things. A doing or standing to B as B does or stands to A". They then go on to say that, as mutual is an equivalent in meaning of the pronoun "each other" with various prepositions, "to use it as well as 'each other' is even more clearly tautological than the already mentioned 'mutual friendship' ". One or two examples of this would surely have been sufficient; but a page and a half is devoted to discussion and illustration; and we perceive as we read that we are being led up to an overwhelming *reductio ad absurdum*. I shall give the first, the middle, and the final stages of this process, and leave it to the reader to decide whether I am right or wrong in calling that process rhetorical:

"If this be the case, much of the lost *mutual* understanding and unity of feeling may be restored.—*Times.*"

Correct, if *mutual* be confined to understanding; they no longer understand *each other.*

"It is now definitely understood that King Edward and President Loubet will meet this afternoon near Paris. Our Paris correspondent says the meeting will take place by mutual desire.—*Times.*"

Right or wrong, according to what is meant by *desire.* (1) If it means that King Edward and M. Loubet desired, that is, had a yearning for, each other, it is correct; but the writer probably never intended so poetic a flight. (2) If it means that they merely desired a meeting it is wrong, exactly as *our mutual friend* is wrong . . .

"There were other means of communication between Claribel and her new prophet. Books were mutually lent to each other.

—BEACONSFIELD."

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This surprising sentence means that *Vanity Fair* was lent to *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Lost* to *Vanity Fair*. If we further assume for politeness' sake that *mutually* is not mere tautology with *to each other*, the only thing left for it to mean is *by each other*. The doubt then remains whether (1) *Paradise Lost* was lent to *Vanity Fair* by *Paradise Lost*, and *Vanity Fair* to *Paradise Lost* by *Vanity Fair*, or (2) *Paradise Lost* was lent to *Vanity Fair* by *Vanity Fair*, and *Vanity Fair* to *Paradise Lost* by *Paradise Lost*. This may be considered captious; but we still wish the author had said either. They lent each other books, or, Books were lent by them to each other.

Such are the ways in which the brothers test their powers, and such the standards by which we measure our delight in them. It must be admitted that the ways are pleasant and the standards high.

Lastly, we come to cruelty. I approach the subject with some natural reluctance, because the title page of the book bears this:

> No levell'd malice
> Infects one comma in the course I hold.

But I think we must take these words as the equivalent of the motto on a mediaeval shield —*Je Garde Foy,* and so forth. It was what you would call fair warning. Most of the quotations above come from the chapter on Vocabulary, because that is the easiest to illustrate from, and of these the majority bear the subscription of newspapers or periodicals. Actually, however, the book instances innumerable common blunders of the most eminent authorship—Thackeray, Brontë, Dickens, Carlyle, Eliot, Kipling, Wells, and others of lesser fame; and it is here that cruelty comes in—not malice, for no malice could be so impersonal—the cruelty of quotation and comment employed without respect of persons for the edification of the common tyro. Any one of these writers could have borne the brunt of a damaging essay more easily—essayists can be humbled. But who could answer this:

"Oh, Burgo, hadst thou not have been a very child, thou shouldst have known that now, at this time of day—after all that thy gallant steed had done for thee—it was impossible for thee or him.—TROLLOPE."

"Mr. Dombey was a grave sight behind the decanters, in a state of dignity; and the East India director was a forlorn sight near the unoccupied end of the table, in a state of solitude; and the major was a military sight, relating stories of the Duke of York to six or seven of the mild men (the ambitious one was utterly quenched); and the Bank Director was a lowly sight, making a plan at his little attempt at a pibery, with dessert knives, for a group of his admirers; and Cousin Feenix was a thoughtful sight, as he smoothed his long wristbands and stealthily adjusted his wig.—DICKENS."

The author is very much at his ease in the last example; the novice who should yawn in our faces with such engaging candour would render himself liable to misinterpretation.

"'Are Japanese Aprils always as lovely as this?' asked the man in the light tweed suit of two others in immaculate flannels with crimson sashes round their waists and puggarees folded in cunning plaits round their broad Terai hats.—SLADEN."

None of us would ask perfection of a writer, or enjoy perfection when we found it; but show us these single instances, these single naked mistakes, and we cannot help falling on them with an indecent pleasure. For a mistake in its proper context, in the book as we read it, is a mistake in flight; and often enough by the time we have turned three pages it will have flown beyond our reach. But take its context from it and it has no defense; it is fair game for the poorest taste as well as for the feeblest intellect.

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All those writers who adorn *The King's English* have been hopelessly compromised; as long as the book remains in print—and may that be forever—so long will they stay, frozen in their unseemly attitudes. It is not that the Fowlers display them with any triumph, for then our sympathies would certainly be aroused. On the contrary: if they had any anger they have long discarded it, if they ever gave way to laughter they have long bottled it up. Their weapons are politeness, humour, and irony, their authority is scholarship; and their very moderation is the most deadly thing about them. I can think of no one else who teaches with such propriety, and criticizes with such impropriety —since no criticism can be proper when it offers with supreme disinterest the deadly imputation that slipshod writing is the result of slipshod thinking.

And there is no appeal against their verdict and no balm for their victims—except one; they were martyred in a good cause. They were not victimized that rules of thumb and canons of exact behaviour could flourish over their dust. Offending against taste and grammar, and sometimes against good sense itself, they represent something of literature's will to live. So do the Fowlers who display them: for the Fowlers do not preach the death of method; they preach the life of order.

Most grammars, written with strict intention, end by creating dullness—and dullness is only one step from Chaos, the greatest disorder of all: we have Pope's authority for it. Ignoring the great and orderly English virtue of compromise, they are in general in dead English and about dead English. But when the Fowlers write of it the language stirs and stretches. It becomes more difficult for us and more troublesome, moodier, more unmethodical. And richer. And more alive.

III

The Dictionary Of Modern English Usage is dedicated

TO THE MEMORY OF MY BROTHER

FRANCIS GEORGE FOWLER, M.A. CANTAB.

WHO SHARED WITH ME THE PLANNING OF THIS BOOK, BUT DID NOT SHARE THE WRITING.

I think of it as it should have been, with its prolixities docked, its dullnesses enlivened, its fads eliminated, its truths multiplied. He had a nimbler wit, a better sense of proportion, and a more open mind, than his twelve year older partner; . . .

Dedications, epitaphs, and the rest, have generally little to commend them but curiosity; but here is one, I think, which really does what it was meant to do, which really conjures up something of the immortal human spirit. It is pleasant to read and re-read; and in its own way, comforting.

But it does the elder Fowler less than justice. *The Dictionary* is no worse proportioned and no less open-minded than *The King's English*; fads there may be—could the language survive without them?—, prolixities there are none; and if there was a nimbler wit at work in the first book I confess I cannot see where.

What is more to the point is that a lexicographer is actually requiring wit in a dictionary: and we may well ask ourselves what sort of dictionary it is likely to be. We recollect vaguely that Samuel Johnson made jokes about Scotsmen, we consider that one does not read *Johnson's Dictionary* any more; and, putting the two facts together, make a most damning total of them. But I suspect that Mr. Fowler was using "wit" in terms of "intelligence"—in terms of Carey's "universall monarchy"—and that he meant his dictionary to be not merely authoritative or explanatory but creative.

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This, of course, brings us very little nearer to finding what sort of dictionary this is. One could say immediately that it is in the highest degree useful because it lives up to its title, because Mr. Fowler really has his finger on the pulse of modern language: and perhaps that last phrase is the least inadequate description of it; for it tells us what parts of the language are alive and what parts have ceased to live, and how the language can be made to suffer, and how it can be kept in health. The *Dictionary* is not concerned with explanations where explanations do not serve its purpose. If, for instance, you want the meaning of "philosophy" you must go to Webster or Will Durant or even to philosophy itself: but if you are doubtful as to the validity of "to quieten", or wonder whether "anent" is as sickly as it sounds, then the *Dictionary* will have an answer for you. If I have little to say about the book here, that is because I defy anybody to write about one dictionary without compiling another. I would rather try to explain, with whatever inadequacy, how the book is not only a writer's book of reference, but a reader's book of delight.

Suppose we are writing some such sentence as this: "He was a man of amazing perspicuity". We may remember with sudden discomfort that there is another word "perspicacity", and that "perspicacity" is possibly the word we should have used. *Perspicuus* and *perspicax* creep into our minds out of a past we should have done well to remember; and we wish we had something more of it on our shelves than the Virgil we keep for whatever rags of pleasure can still be got from the Sixth Book. At this point the counsels of expediency suggest a reference to some brief and compendious work which will give us our answer without more ado; but if the counsels of ambition prevail we shall thereupon turn to Mr. Fowler's Dictionary:

> **perspic-.** *Perspicacious, -acity,* mean (having or showing) insight; *perspicuous, -uity,* mean (the being) easy to get a clear idea of; see PAIRS & SNARES. . . . The learned . . . can safely venture on the *perspic-* pairs; when the unlearned pretender claims acquaintance with them, they are apt to punish the familiarity by showing he is in fact a stranger to them.

This is not specially salty, or original, or scholarly. But consider a moment. It is now time to correct our sentence; yet have we not heard, somewhere in that brief passage, a fatal, a siren, voice? We may have got past the PAIRS & SNARES (capitals mean another article in the *Dictionary*) but it is supremely difficult not to go on reading. Turn the page and there is "phenomenal". It is

> . . . a metaphysical term with a use of its own. To divert from this proper use to a job for which it is not needed, by making it do duty for *remarkable, extraordinary,* or *prodigious,* is a sin against the English language. It has gone through the phases, Philosophic Term, POPULARIZED TECHNICALITY, & VOGUE-WORD, & is now in the state of discredit (cf. INDIVIDUAL), the moment when believers in sound English may deliver their attack upon such usages with hope of success.

With any reasonably frail reader an hour may pass before he shuts the book; and by then he may have forgotten whether his gentleman is to be perspicuous or perspicacious.

But the hour will have been *spent* and not wasted. For what Mr. Fowler teaches is the cultivation of a literary conscience, and most of us have the wretched arrogance to think we can do without it. We laugh at the sport's writer when he says that a boxer was "kayoed in the penultimate stanza"; but at least his bread and butter depend on his synonyms. We do not laugh at ourselves

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for using "psychological moment" or confusing *polity* with *policy*.

Here a distinction—a very arbitrary distinction no doubt—could be made between a writer with conscience and a conscientious writer: in the sense that we can understand Mr. George Moore's spending a day over one sentence, where it is merely sad to think of Mr. Thornton Wilder doing the same thing: in the sense that use is one thing and decoration another. Mr. Fowler does not teach us how to give sound and volume to an empty thought, any more than he would care to show us the way to strange and fantastic turns of speech. Rather, his Dictionary shows us the innumerable ways in which modern English can be misinterpreted or mispronounced; and the one way in which the least of us can keep it alive.

Avoid what is slipshod; turn from what is showy—from imported words, or phrases of dull humour, or catchwords, or rags of scientific terminology. Let the writer's English be correct at least, and let it come from him and not from his admiration for or his acquisition of another man's style. That, in weak paraphrase, is the Fowlers' message, and there are few of us so perfect that we can afford to neglect it.

How shall we describe the Fowlers? They are humanists in the English tradition of Cheke and Ascham; they have the Victorian gift of scholarly humour; but there is something more to them than that, something which cannot be pigeon-holed so easily, or indeed be pigeon-holed at all. They believe that the changes of outlook and belief, that the chances of fate, that the slow death of old words and the slow recognition of new, will look after the growth and vitality of literature; and in the heart of this belief lies the secret of their work. They are concerned with the life, experience, and destiny of words. So, you would say, is the philologist. But the philologist approaches language in a scientific manner, and the Fowlers approach it in a literary manner. I do not suggest that their knowledge is unscientific and therefore irresponsible; but I do suggest that the literary creator in them is preferred before the scientific, and that they have almost the same feeling for words that a novelist has for characters. Preoccupation with the word, and preoccupation with form is an English characteristic, sometimes an English vice; but in this case it is justified, even to those who most dislike it. "Otherwise is now having very curious experiences—", "We should like to see this stranger received ceremoniously, as well as politely, that is, with quotation marks." This is not just a trick of speech. It lies at the heart of something which most bewilders and most enchants us in their work. It explains why they have made syntax and punctuation readable, and it explains some part of the miracle of a dictionary which satisfies more than a thirst for definition, or spelling, or etymology. If both books are monuments of instructive writing, they are also witness to the delights of creative thinking: there is an imagination in them.

It is true that there are places where the brothers have digged a pit and fallen into it themselves; and that they are sometimes over-didactic and sometimes over-anxious; but that is no more than to say that they are not perfect teachers. As for perfect teachers, there may be some—and I should hate to meet them. As for the Fowlers, I would rather leave them with a quotation which, by a just coincidence, concludes *The King's English*:

> "There are others with faults of temper, &c., evident enough, beside whom we live content, as if the air about them did us good."

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THE ALMANAC

by Henry Morton Robinson

Equinoctial moon; lunar tides running high; Pollux rises 8 p.m. Beware of poison ivy while picking beach-plums. This day in history: Eli Whitney invents cotton gin, 1808; Charles I beheaded, 1649; Chicago Nationals take lead in pennant race, 1883. Money compounded semi-annually at 6 percent doubles itself in 11 yrs., 5 mos., 22 das. Look out for sunstroke, prickly heat, mad dogs, grade-crossings, green apples and cholera morbus.—*The Maverick Almanac.*

THERE is nothing so catholic as a good almanac. It sees all, knows all, tells all, with simplicity rivalling the first apostolic sermons, and with a garrulity never equalled except in the diaries of the piddling great. An almanac is a granary of uselessly interesting fact, a lexicon of out-moded wit, and the chap-book of that single greatest subject of human interest—the weather. No library of *Americana* is complete without a dozen almanacs, ranging from *Poor Robin's* (a cousin of *Poor Richard's*) through the famous *Farmer's Almanack*, down to the degenerate but still fascinating patent-medicine flyer of the present day. No universal reader can escape the duty (and pleasure) of comparing the road tax of Connecticut with that of Virginia for 1797, or of assimilating the fact that Horace Greeley found his chief relaxation in the eating of ripe gooseberries while composing his editorials against Abraham Lincoln. These and ten thousand other unrelated facts have no unity and no common denominator outside an almanac, but within the closely printed pages of an old edition these strange bedfellows sleep in perpetual harmony—antiquated motes in the world's factual dustbin.

In smart circles the Almanac is no longer considered top-cut reading matter, but in the post-revolutionary era it was the oftenest-used and most-read book in America. It was the encyclopaedia of Colonial wit and wisdom; the fore-runner of the agricultural magazine; the calendar, horse doctor, time-table and friend of the common man. In thousands of early American homes it was the only profane reading matter obtainable; Ellery Channing, speaking of the poorer farmers of New England, says:

> Books to them
> Are the faint dreams of students, save that one—
> The battered Almanack—split to the core,
> Fly-blown and tattered, that above the fire
> Devoted smokes, and furnishes the fates
> And perigees and apogees of moons.

Purchased from the "Flying Stationer" or itinerant book-pedlar of the period, the Almanac was hung on a hook above the fireplace, from which it descended nightly to alternate with the Bible as instruction and entertainment for the whole family. The margins of the Almanac were used as diaries or account books (blank pages were sewed in for just such purposes) while precious recipes for man and beast were frequently scrawled on its covers. To destroy an almanac was an act of vandalism that no adult could contemplate and no child be guilty of. In many families, complete files were preserved; such a file, say of the *Farmer's Almanack*, would

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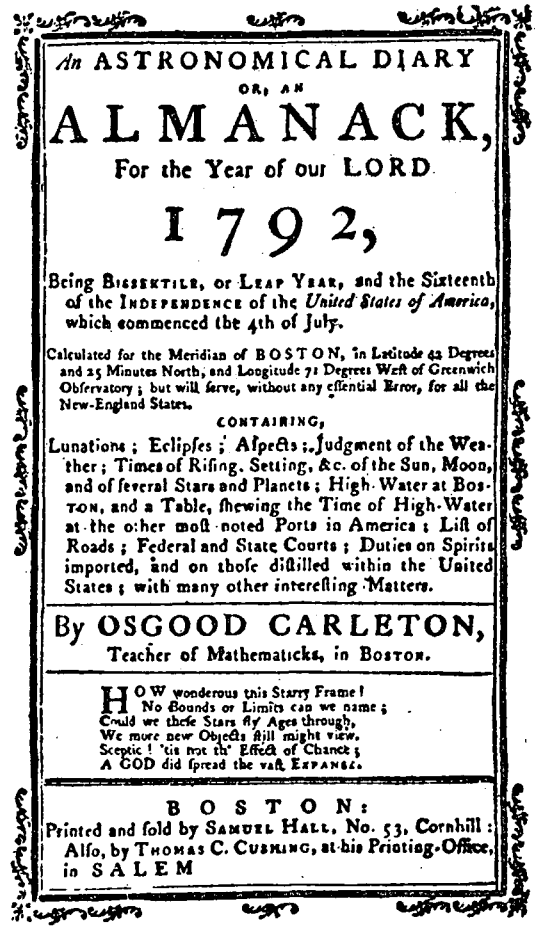
extend from Washington's second administration to the present day, and the contents of its crackling brown pages would place it among the most important of those sub-literary documents which are only beginning to be prized as treasure-trove of pure *Americana.*

Of the dozen or more Almanacs that flashed their wood-block covers at early American readers, not more than three can claim the prolonged attention of our age. Of these, *Poor Richard's Almanack* is, quite justly, the most familiar to our generation. Franklin's gift of proverb-making is unequalled in any language (including the Scandinavian and the Persian); his homely wisdom of "waste not, want not", was sewn into the very fabric of Colonial culture, and his *Almanack* is the mouthpiece of an original society that is more concerned with husbandry than metaphysics.

But actually Franklin's publication was inferior, as a general almanac, to *The Astronomical Diary* published between 1728 and 1765 by Dr. Nathaniel Ames, father of Fisher Ames, the Revolutionary patriot. *The Astronomical Diary* had a tremendous following in New England, and was highly regarded for the accuracy of its tide-charts, solar tables, calculations of eclipses, and lunar changes. These celestial matters were of vast importance to the isolated, clockless, farmer or fisherman steeped as they were in superstition regarding the influence of moon and tide upon their respective professions, and legitimately interested in the seasonal changes that affected their codfish and potatoes. The success of Dr. Ames's almanac can be fairly attributed to his mathematical observations, which were excellent, and to his political observations, which were strongly republican. Both were timely, accurate, and sincere —a trio of virtues which causes the historian McMasters to declare that "the country physician Nathaniel Ames put forth for thirty-six years the best Almanac in the colonies".

There were plenty of other almanacs dodging about the eighteenth-century landscape: Clough's *New England Almanack* (1700); *Poor Robin's* (1710); *Poor Will's* (1790); but they were local, short-lived affairs when compared with the *Farmer's Almanack*, founded by Robert Bailey Thomas in 1792, and extant to this day. The *Farmer's Almanack* is the oldest living periodical in America. It is the hardy perennial of our journalism (or literature, whichever you prefer) and though



An ASTRONOMICAL DIARY
OR, AN
ALMANACK,
For the Year of our LORD
1792,

Being BISSEXTILE, or LEAP YEAR, and the Sixteenth of the INDEPENDENCE of the *United States of America*, which commenced the 4th of July.

Calculated for the Meridian of BOSTON, in Latitude 42 Degrees and 25 Minutes North, and Longitude 71 Degrees West of Greenwich Observatory; but will ſerve, without any eſſential Error, for all the New-England States.

CONTAINING,

Lunations; Eclipſes; Aſpects; Judgment of the Weather; Times of Riſing, Setting, &c. of the Sun, Moon, and of ſeveral Stars and Planets; High-Water at BOSTON, and a Table, ſhewing the Time of High-Water at the other moſt noted Ports in America; Liſt of Roads; Federal and State Courts; Duties on Spirits imported, and on thoſe diſtilled within the United States; with many other intereſting Matters.

By OSGOOD CARLETON,
Teacher of Mathematicks, in BOSTON.

HOW wonderous this Starry Frame!
No Bounds or Limits can we name;
Could we theſe Stars fly Ages through,
We more new Objects ſtill might view.
Sceptic! 'tis not th' Effect of Chance;
A GOD did ſpread the vaſt EXPANSE.

BOSTON:
Printed and ſold by SAMUEL HALL, No. 53, Cornhill:
Alſo, by THOMAS C. CUSHING, at his Printing-Office, in SALEM

The title-page of Osgood Carleton's Astronomical Diary, 1792

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it has long since ceased to exert any cultural influence whatsoever, it carries within its file of one hundred and forty years a stout freight of sub-literary *Americana*.

I found the story of Mr. Thomas and his Almanack both amusing and instructive. Judge for yourself.

Robert Bailey Thomas was ten years old when certain chests of British tea were dumped into Boston Harbour. His father, a schoolmaster in Sterling, Massachusetts, was willing enough to send his son to Harvard, but the younger Thomas seemed disposed to

get along without the benefits of higher education, and rigorously set himself to a course of "self-improvement"—which course consisted chiefly in reading all the books in his father's library. Among these books was Ferguson's *Astronomy*—a classic work from which Thomas first imbibed the idea of "calculating an almanack". But at sixteen he lacked the necessary mathematics for figuring "lunations", as the courses of the moon were called, so he deferred the dream and followed his father's footsteps as a schoolmaster in his native town of Sterling. He acquired some renown as a teacher of penmanship, but the practice of "boarding the teacher around" soured him on schoolmastering, so he hired out as an apprentice bookbinder. Meanwhile he was also studying astronomy and mathematics, piously fitting himself for the high office of Almanack-Maker. At the age of twenty-four he employed N. Coverly, the Boston printer, to print for him a thousand copies of Perry's *Spelling Book*, which he himself bound and sold to the country schools. Husbanding his small profit on the spellers, Thomas now attended a mathematics school conducted in Boston by one Osgood Carleton—an almanac-maker of repute. Under Carleton's tutelage he learned to make the necessary calculations of lunar aspects, mean tides, sunrise and sunset, and (an extra touch) the rising and setting of the principal constellations. Nothing was lacking now but a vacant Chair of Almanackery—and this soon presented itself.

In 1792 Osgood Carleton decided to retire from the turmoil of almanac-making, whereupon his aptest pupil filled the propitious breach with a brand new publication shrewdly entitled the *Farmer's Almanack*. The new venture was a tremendous success, chiefly, I think, because Thomas gauged his agricultural audience to a hair. He knew that his readers were principally interested in crops and weather, and that their very lives pivoted upon the successful cultivation and cropping of the earth's fruit. Though not a farmer himself, Thomas had acquired a good literary knowledge of husbandry from his study of Virgil's *Eclogues* and Cato's *Treatise on Agriculture*. He proceeded to set down his classic wisdom (augmented by sound observations of his own) in pithy sentences suited to the season. Thus for October, 1797, he writes:

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Winter apples should now be gathered in, as hard frosts hurt them much. Remove those underneath the tree and pick off with your hand all you can take conveniently before shaking the tree.

Harvest your Indian corn without delay, or the birds and squirrels, I am confident, will.

Potatoes not dug this week will be regretted next.

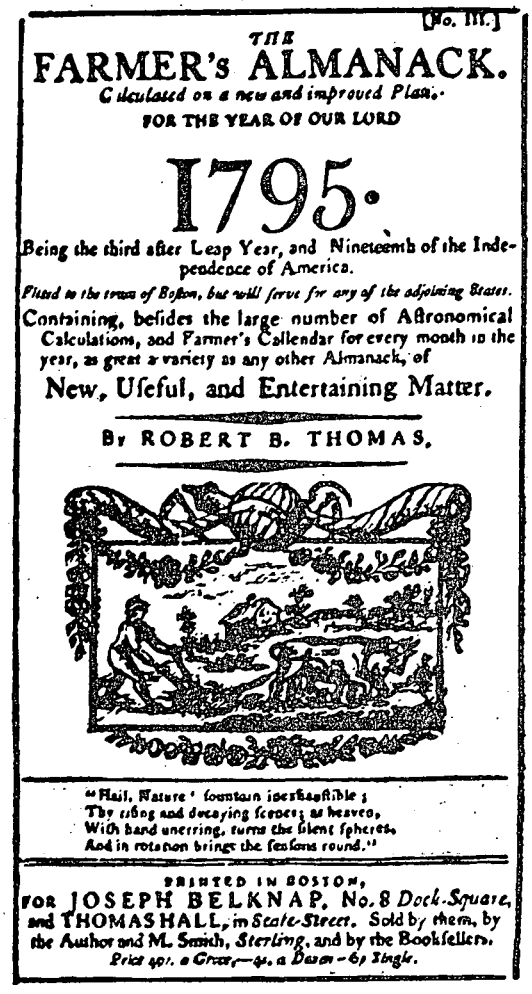
Finish making cider as soon as possible. To have it fine and clear, grind up the apples the previous evening to laying up. Lay it up early in the morning and press moderately.

Indulge not your children in eating too much fruit if you would save the doctor a visit.

These laconic spurs to husbandry were relished by rural readers, but Thomas quickly discovered that mere agricultural hints soon became monotonous to write, as well as to read. Accordingly he began to intersperse his columns with notes of a more general literary and moral character. The young editor did not possess Ben Franklin's genius for proverb-casting, but he did possess a ready wit and a well-stocked mind. His quality is fairly shown in the truism: "If you want the time to pass quickly, just give your note for 90 days". After telling of a skinflint farmer who would not permit his wife to make a "mynce-pie" on Thanksgiving Day, Thomas observes: "Economy is to be recommended, but I hate a niggard". Temperance, frugality, and other fustian virtues were illustrated by means of sugar-coated anecdotes, couched in the style of Addison's *Spectator*—the stylistic standard of the age on both sides the Atlantic. Often enough the moral was pointed by a short imaginary conversation between two characters:

GOING TO MEETING

"Good morning, Squire Thimbleberry! So you are carrying out your whole family to meeting this morning, to hear the New Year's sermon?"


[No. III.]

THE

FARMER's ALMANACK.

Calculated on a new and improved Plan.

FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD

1795.

Being the third after Leap Year, and Nineteenth of the Independence of America.

Fitted to the town of Boston, but will serve for any of the adjoining States.

Containing, besides the large number of Astronomical Calculations, and Farmer's Callendar for every month in the year, as great a variety as any other Almanack, of

New, Useful, and Entertaining Matter.

By ROBERT B. THOMAS.

"Hail, Nature! fountain inexhaustible;
Thy ebbing and decaying scenes as heaven,
With hand unerring, turns the silent spheres,
And in rotation brings the seasons round."

PRINTED IN BOSTON,

FOR JOSEPH BELKNAP, No. 8 *Dock-Square*, and THOMAS HALL, in *State-Street*. Sold by them, by the Author and M. Smith, *Sterling*, and by the Booksellers.

Price 40s. a Gross,—4s. a Dozen—6d Single.

Title-page, The Farmer's Almanack, 1795

"Yes, Mr. Weathergood, I always intend that my family shall attend meeting at all times of the year on Sunday, unless they have a special reason for staying home. There are a few fashionable bucks in the neighborhood who would persuade my boys to go to the tavern rather than to the church; but by my troth, sir, may I see my sons borne to their graves sooner than follow the practice of these swelling, swearing, swaggering, soaking, smoking, foppish, fuddling fools! Zounds, sir, I have no patience when I behold the folly of the times." (January, 1815.)

That the editor had staunch views on lay education as well as on Sunday school at-

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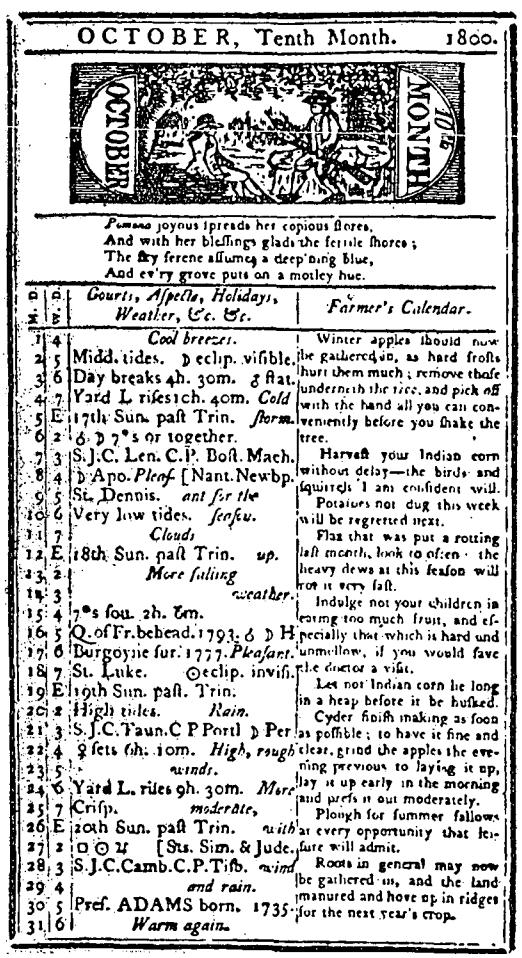
tendance, is shown in his Almanack for 1808, where we find him recommending the public schools and inveighing against academies:

PUBLIC SCHOOLS ARE BEST

In winter, when nothing valuable can be done about the farm, let your boys and girls attend school. Send them to the common town school rather than to the academy. Fun, frolic, and filigree are too much practised at the academies for the good of the farmer's boy. Academies were never meant for those who must spend their lives on the farm. And heark ye! Do not interfere with the orders and regulations of the master. [Echoes of Thomas's own school-teaching experience?] When your darling Timmy is whipt at school, it is a miserable thing to give him gingerbread and call the master a puppy, rascal, etcetera.



OCTOBER, Tenth Month. 1800.

OCTOBER 10th MONTH

Pomona joyous spreads her copious stores,
And with her blessings glads the fertile shores;
The sky serene assumes a deep'ning blue,
And ev'ry grove puts on a motley hue.

M. D.	W. D.	*Courts, Aspects, Holidays, Weather, &c. &c.*	*Farmer's Calendar.*
1	4	*Cool breezes.*	Winter apples should now be gathered in, as hard frosts hurt them much; remove those underneath the tree, and pick off with the hand all you can conveniently before you shake the tree.
2	5	Midd. tides. ☽ eclip. visible.	
3	6	Day breaks 4h. 30m. ♂ stat.	
4	7	Yard L. rises 1ch. 40m. *Cold*	
5	E	17th Sun. past Trin. *storm.*	
6	2	♂ ☽ 7*s or together.	
7	3	S.J.C. Len. C.P. Bost. Mach.	Harvest your Indian corn without delay—the birds and squirrels I am confident will.
8	4	☽ Apo. *Pleas.* [Nant. Newbp.	
9	5	St. Dennis. *ant for the*	Potatoes not dug this week will be regretted next.
10	6	Very low tides. *season.*	
11	7	*Clouds*	Flax that was put a rotting last month, look to often: the heavy dews at this season will rot it very fast.
12	E	18th Sun. past Trin. *up.*	
13	2	*More falling*	
14	3	*weather.*	Indulge not your children in eating too much fruit, and especially that which is hard and unmellow, if you would save the doctor a visit.
15	4	7*s sou. 2h. 6m.	
16	5	Q. of Fr. behead. 1793. ♂ ☽ H	
17	6	Burgoyne sur. 1777. *Pleasant.*	
18	7	St. Luke. ☉ eclip. invisi.	
19	E	19th Sun. past. Trin.	Let not Indian corn lie long in a heap before it be husked.
20	2	High tides. *Rain.*	
21	3	S.J.C. Taun. C P Portl ☽ Per	Cyder finish making as soon as possible; to have it fine and clear, grind the apples the evening previous to laying it up, lay it up early in the morning and press it out moderately.
22	4	♀ sets 6h. 10m. *High, rough*	
23	5	*winds.*	
24	6	Yard L. rises 9h. 30m. *More*	
25	7	Crisp. *moderate,*	Plough for summer fallows at every opportunity that leisure will admit.
26	E	20th Sun. past Trin. *with*	
27	2	□ ☉ ♃ [Sts. Sim. & Jude.	
28	3	S.J.C. Camb. C.P. Tisb. *wind*	Roots in general may now be gathered in, and the land manured and hove up in ridges for the next year's crop.
29	4	*and rain.*	
30	5	Pres. ADAMS born. 1735.	
31	6	*Warm again.*	

Specimen page from the 1800 edition

The editor of the *Farmer's Almanack* is as notable for what he left out of his book as for what he included. From the first, Thomas rigorously excluded from his almanac such superstitions as "astrological prophecies" and the *Homo Signorum* (Man of the Zodiac). These were bold deletions; hitherto no successful almanac-maker had dared omit the Man of the Zodiac. Indeed, the figure of a naked man surrounded by zodiacal signs, each sign connected by arrows with some part of the body, is still a familiar symbol in patent-medicine almanacs. In the eighteenth-century the Man of the Zodiac was considered the prime ingredient of a good almanac, yet in spite of this tradition Thomas's Yankee sense told him that the signs of the zodiac had nothing to do with the human body. He could not persuade himself that Aries controlled the head, or Taurus the neck and throat, any more than that Jove still sat on Olympus. Buttressed by his own convictions he barred the *Homo Signorum* from his almanac in spite of the continued protests of his more ignorant readers.

As with the Man of the Zodiac, so with the astrological prophecies. Thomas, a fairly good astronomer, believed that the planets rolled in their orbits without discernible reference to the affairs of men. To pretend otherwise was to be something that Thomas despised—a quack. Accordingly he dispensed with the usual prognostications of death to crowned heads, national catastrophes, and all such horoscopic folly. "Wind and weather", he observes, "are more important and interesting than any quantity of gaseous nonsense about the planets."

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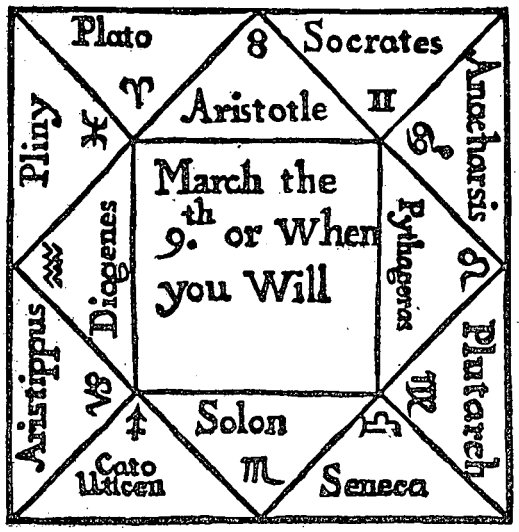
He did not, however, entirely abandon the zodiacal signs in his graphic representations of the months, but so altered them as to make them consonant with familiar American usage. Thus *Aquarius*, the symbol for January, is represented by a man pouring water on a mill-wheel. The Fishes (February) shows a mess of trout laid on a bank with their tails tied together very neatly indeed. The *Gemini* are represented as two youths walking in a field; and the Archer (*Sagittarius*) is depicted as a stout bowman in the act of drawing a bead on some fleeting deer.

As for the illustrations themselves, they rank with the best graphic art produced in America before or since. They are of course woodcuts, true black and whites, cut on oak blocks by Hammatt Billings. Billings's woodcuts ran uninterruptedly in the *Farmer's Almanack* from 1809 to 1853. In the latter year some new cuts, much inferior to Billings's work, had to be made to replace the old blocks which were very much worn. Frequent retouching of Father Time's beard on the title-page is noticeable—the retoucher's skill being vastly inferior to that of the original designer. In 1837 Thomas published (by overwhelming popular demand) a woodcut likeness of himself, which shows us a round-cheeked Pickwickian countenance, as healthy and as hearty as the publication in which it appeared.

For over half a century Robert Thomas calculated his "lunations" with painstaking precision. The accuracy of these lunar tables is best illustrated by the famous trial in which Abraham Lincoln brought an almanac into court to refute damaging testimony that the moon's light had revealed his client engaged in a criminal act. "You saw the defendant, at ten o'clock, in the moonlight?" asked Lincoln, cross-examining. "Yes, quite clearly," was the reply. Lincoln then produced an almanac and showed that on the night in question the moon had not risen until 10.40 p.m. His client was acquitted. It does not appear that the *Farmer's Almanack* was the lunar authority quoted above, but the anecdote would demonstrate that the accuracy of a good almanac was unquestionable, even in a court of law.

More interesting than the lunar calculations is the potpourri of cultural material



Mock Horoscope, Poor Robin's Almanack, 1690

Thomas diligently collected from the best sources. Leafing through his almanac for 1825 we find it to be a forty-eight-page booklet crammed with tidbits of philosophy and poetry, moral and profane—a handbook touching upon all important questions of the day. Slavery, Indian wars, witchcraft, the morality of the theatre, and the condition of the post roads were but a few of the subjects presented by the editor. One of the permanent features of the almanac was the "Roads List", a catalogue of all navigable roads between Quebec and Savannah, a veritable Blue Book of Stage-Coaching, with

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travelling directions, mileage, and the names of the best inns to be found along the way.

Patriotic material was sure-fire stuff, so Thomas was always well to the fore with historical anecdotes, militia regulations, and naval statistics. Subscribers in 1815 were probably thrilled to read the list of "First-line ships of the American Navy", headed by the *Constitution, United States*, and *President*, all of 44 guns; followed by "the names of the frigates captured from the British in the late war: *Macedonian*, 38 guns; *Alert*, 22 guns, and *Duke of Gloucester*, 18 guns". When Perry defeated the British at Lake Erie, Thomas brought out a long ballad entitled, punningly, "*Yankee Perry Better than Old English Cyder*. To be Sung to the Tune of *Three Yankee Pigeons*". The ballad is anonymous doggerel, but it comes as near being spontaneous folk balladry as can be found in our literature.

The *Farmer's Almanack* was published in Sterling, Massachusetts, where Thomas kept his bookstore; it was also on sale in Boston, Salem, New York, and Philadelphia, where it rubbed covers with the *Athenaeum, Dial*, and *North American Review*. But the bulk of Thomas's audience was in the backwoods, an audience reached by the pack-pedlars who were quite literally the circulating libraries of the day. In the decade between 1820-1830, Thomas's accounts show that upwards of 200,000 *Farmer's Almanacks* were sold by these Flying Stationers alone; the retail price was ten cents, and a solid dime's worth it was, too. As a calendar alone it was worth the money, but when the purchaser got through thumbing the closely packed pages of wit, wisdom, advice and advertising (plenty of agricultural gear, and medicines for man and beast filled the advertising section) he had probably received the biggest literary value of that or any age.

In the fifty-fifth year of his editorship and the eightieth year of his life, Robert Bailey Thomas laid down a proof sheet of his forthcoming Almanac for 1847, and said: "My eyes are dim from reading such a quantity of fine print". He retired to his bedroom, lay down, and in a few hours quietly passed away. Thousands of homely letters indicate that he was genuinely mourned by whole families of readers who regarded the editor of the *Farmer's Almanack* as a cross between oracle and personal friend. By his will he left a large estate to his nephews, and gave directions that they continue to publish the Almanac until at least one hundred numbers had appeared. Under the supervision of two nephews the *Farmer's Almanack* went through one hundred and fourteen annual printings. In 1904 it passed out of the hands of the Thomas family, and, though it has steadily declined in importance since that time, it is still brought out annually by a firm of New York publishers, chiefly for its value as an advertising medium.

The Almanac was crowded out long ago by the agricultural magazine, the advertising calendar (oleograph finish) and the whole brigade of cheap and nasty literature that marches up to the farmer's door. But for nearly a century the Almanac reigned as the undisputed champion of farm-house reading matter. It was the scientific and intellectual expression of candle-light America; and a file of old almanacs conveys, as well as the printed page can, the spirit of an age when husbandry was in flower and a patented disk-harrow was the final utterance of science.

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METHOD IN THEIR MADNESS

SIDELIGHTS ON THE WRITING HABITS OF AUTHORS—PART TWO

by Edward Weeks

IV

Literary saturation is often rather important in the preparation of a novel. Any narrative of the past ought to be so steeped in atmosphere that like a good Harris tweed it gives off the very aroma of its country. Conan Doyle tells us he read three hundred books to give him the right approach to *The White Company*. Charles Reade made notes for *The Cloister and the Hearth* as though it were a Ph.D. thesis. In the *Saturday Evening Post* a beginning novelist, Kenneth Roberts, has described the various stages in the writing of his book, *Arundel*. It was in 1917, following the publication of his first short story, that Mr. Roberts first contemplated the writing of a series of three novels dealing with the development of one family through three important periods in the history of his native state—the pioneering and Revolutionary period, the shipping period, and the summer-resort period of Maine. "I even made", he said, "a tentative effort to toy with the first novel in the series and was pained to learn that I knew nothing at all about what I proposed to write and even less about how to write it."

So the idea remained incipient until 1925, when he began a fresh assault. He concluded that the first novel might well start with the Louisburg Expedition of 1745, bear down heavily on the French and Indian wars and wind up with Benedict Arnold's march through the wilderness to Quebec. Mr. Roberts obtained upwards of thirty books on the siege of Louisburg. The upshot of reading them was that the Louisburg Expedition could not be made to fit his scheme.

That forced him forward to the French and Indian wars, but before he could get that far he had to obtain definite information on the Indians of Maine—what they wore and ate, how they lived, talked and hunted, how they made their weapons and why some were at peace and some at war with the whites. He also had to have equally authoritative information about the white settlers in southern Maine.

"By the middle of 1928", he writes, "I had rounded up all available reference books on the Abenaki Indians, histories of most of the towns in southern Maine, and all known diaries, documents, letters, biographies and histories dealing with Benedict Arnold's expedition to Quebec and with the assault on the city by American troops in a blinding snowstorm on January 1, 1776. There were, I may say without exaggeration, a lot of these books—not quite enough to fill a freight car, but more than enough to place a severe dent in the theory that the only equipment needed in the writing of a novel is a large pad of paper, several pencils and a place to hang the hat."

The actual writing of the book in question did not begin until September, 1928, eleven years after the idea occurred to him and three

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years after his first investigation. Literary saturation is apt to be a slow process; it not infrequently compels a two-year interval in the work even of an experienced author. Had Mr. Roberts been a gentleman of leisure his method might have been hastened but as with most of us he took on his first novel in the time he could spare from other work.

Joseph Conrad began the writing of his first book, *Almayer's Folly*, without a single note of any kind. But I advise against following his example: most of us will tend to be careless architects of creation—and the elements of time and space, lineage and weather need strict attention. Before Thornton Wilder took up his studies at the American Academy in Rome he had explored and charted the Celestial City across maps and through the stacks of the Yale Library. The image held for him a fascination that acquaintance only strengthened. I think you feel this devotion to be the source of the lovely detail in *The Cabala.*

If it is a three-generation novel you have on your mind you had better work out a family tree or pedigree. It is decidedly embarrassing to have a dead and out-of-the-way character pop back into a story, as even Thackeray had to admit. Remember with what paternal care Galsworthy has reared the Forsytes and take my word for it that there are ludicrous inconsistencies of age in occasional manuscripts that come my way. Again, "to one who has been long in city pent" a farmer's almanac is often a good friend. You have got to be reasonably consistent—more especially if your novel is dated—with the occurrence of your storms and moonlight, your tides and equinoxes. Do you remember how Dickens in *Nicholas Nickleby* has the pupils of Dotheboys Hall ordered to crack the ice in the pond one moment and to weed the garden in the next?

Then there is the matter of houses. Take the case of young Anthony Trollope, a postal clerk in Ireland who had inherited his family's ambition to write: observe how he received the impetus for his first novel. "I was located at a little town called Drumsua," he writes in his forthright *Autobiography* "and my friend John Merivale was staying with me for a day or two. As we were taking a walk in that most uninteresting country, we turned up through a deserted gateway, along a weedy, grass-grown avenue, till we came to the modern ruins of a country house. It was one of the most melancholy spots I ever visited. I will not describe it here, because I have done so in the first chapter of my first novel. We wandered about the place, suggesting to each other causes for the misery we saw there, and while I was still among the ruined walls and decayed beams I fabricated the plot of *The Macdermots of Ballycloran.*"

Having once selected your house, you must know it inside and out: you have got to know whether the floors are highly polished, for on them in time to come your wealthy dowager may take her fatal tumble; you have got to know whether your heroine's bedroom is so placed that lover Tom can see her light as he rides by, and if your front door is to resist the sheriff you—and the reader—must examine its timber and bolts. Shortly after her novel *Jalna* was awarded the Atlantic prize I had some amusing correspondence with Miss de la Roche. As I hope most of you know, the Whiteoaks are a fairly numerous clan; in fact the wonder occurred to our proof readers, who are very nice in such matters, that the various members of the household could be decently distributed within the limits of that red brick house known as Jalna. So we asked if the author would send us her scheme of things.

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"In thinking over the space in the house," she replied, "I find that there should have been six bedrooms instead of five. I have therefore made this change in the proof. I have also added a few words to the effect that the attic was divided into two bedrooms which in my own mind was clear. Of the six bedrooms Renny and Wakefield occupy one, Piers and Finch another, while the remainder are occupied by Nicholas, Ernest, Meg and Eden. When Piers marries, Finch goes to an attic room. The servants' quarters are in the basement, and Grandmother's bedroom is on the ground floor. This, I think you will agree, is very snug."

Finally, I would touch briefly on the quizzing method. When John Buchan was contemplating a biography of General Lee, and John Drinkwater his play about the same character, they visited, in company with their American publisher, most of the Southern battlefields, and were there introduced to as many survivors of the olden days as they could find. For by word of mouth, and by quizzing those who know, one does receive definite impressions which can hardly be obtained from printed sources. When Sinclair Lewis determined to write a novel about the medical profession I understand that for some time he kept in close touch with Dr. Paul de Kruif, from whom presumably he noted those personal aspects of a profession which was of course quite remote from his own. When he was preparing for *Elmer Gantry* his inquiry led him to Kansas City and even into a pulpit.

So the search for the raw materials goes on. Once found, they are kept in mind until, heated by the imagination, they begin to expand, and in this malleable state are worked over and moulded in accordance with a fairly precise design. Is it any wonder that, with this process taking place, writers are notoriously absent-minded about their manners and umbrellas; is it any wonder that they fill note-books with jottings, leave sheaves of loose papers on every desk and table and cry out with pain when housekeepers try to put their books in order? During this period of preparation and during the more intense interval of actual composition a writer divides himself into two parts, "keeping", as Trollope says, "the intellect by itself clear from the troubles of the world and fit for the duty it has to do".

V

A biographer of Balzac gives us this picture of the great man at work: "Within his sanctum Balzac worked clad in a white Dominican gown with hood, the summer material being dimity and cashmere; he was shod with embroidered slippers, and his waist was girt with a rich Venetian-gold chain, on which were suspended a paper-knife, a pair of scissors, and a gold penknife, all of them beautifully carved. Whatever the season, thick window-curtains shut out the rays of light that might have penetrated into the study, which was illuminated only by two moderate-sized candelabra of unpolished bronze, each holding a couple of continually burning candles". Most of us, I dare say, can get along with a less spectacular equipment. I, for instance, am content with a block of white paper, pencils of No. 2 lead—with serviceable erasers—and a knife with which to keep the points sharp.

By which it will be seen that I am a devotee of longhand. Whether it be the chattering mechanism or my hunt-and-punch system, the fact remains that I have never been so obliviously at ease with a typewriter as I have been with my pencils. Of course, I have to pay a price for remaining old-fashioned, for even though you practise a

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shorthand as did Samuel Pepys there are bound to be times when a pencil simply cannot keep up with your racing thoughts. To allow for this emergency I do most of my writing on the right hand side of my paper, leaving on the left at least a three inch margin. When my thoughts begin to whiz I forsake my sentence structure and turn to the margin where I jot down key words, transitional phrases and bits of dialogue as clues to what is running through my head. Then when the sprint is over I can go back and expand my paragraphs line by line. This speed of the mind—which will not occur day after day—is too valuable to lose.

If there are certain obstacles in the use of longhand there are also certain compensations. Speaking generally, where longhand is apt to produce writing which is close-knit, trimmed and pointed, the machine is too often responsible for that which is verbose and loose. The tortoise is apt to take his steps with logic and selection; the hare covers more ground but sometimes with a very real loss of direction and strength. There are too many exceptions to allow a rule but I do believe that in a majority of cases what we call "fine style" is the result of the longhand method. But, your machine-made man will retort, the price and pressure of contemporary writing demand a greater output and flexibility than is possible with pen and pencil. And there's the rub!

Thus, I have tried to indicate the factors which will have to determine a choice of tools. There is first the freedom which you find in the use of pencil or machine; and secondly that determination which, as Ellis Parker Butler says, must be faced squarely by every beginner: the determination of whether your urge "is essentially a commercial or an aesthetic one".

At the outset, like as not, you will have to do your writing on the side: you will be responsible to some other trade for your livelihood. So you will have the opportunity to write to please yourself—and that is generally a slow and fastidious business. In the writing of this paper, for instance, which has required the correlation of a good many details, I have never done better than four hundred words an hour. That is hardly a commercial stride.

When Kenneth Roberts withdrew from his other work and went to Italy to write his first novel he made headway at the rate of 2200 words a day, longhand. To be sure he did nothing else but eat and sleep—and I don't blame him! When *Hatter's Castle* was at white heat, Dr. Cronin turned off 50,000 words in ten days, longhand. "It nearly killed me", he said. Conrad was content to average 350 a day. Ellis Parker Butler tells us that in one year he wrote seventy-five short stories totalling about 300,000 words. Then he thought he'd try quantity production and so wrote 3,000,000 words the next year—with, incidentally, exactly the same financial return as when he had written one-tenth as much. The million words may scare you, but 200,000 shouldn't. That figure, or something not much less, is what you ought to be capable of in a twelvemonth if you are to make that break which all aspiring writers fear and long for.

You may be sure Mr. Butler used the typewriter when he went after his non-stop flight. But I don't mean to imply that the use of the machine is largely confined to works of fiction. In my acquaintance Mr. James Truslow Adams and Dr. C. M. Fuess, both historians and biographers of excellence, compose directly on the typewriter with a mastery that I envy. What you read is not, of course, their first tune. They type and retype, fit in and strike out in a process that

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may be three times repeated. In addition to carrying on an enormous correspondence (which he types) Mr. Adams may publish as much as 275,000 words a year, whereas Dr. Fuess can find time for a two-volume biography while teaching English.

There is another time saver, a method that comes with long experience and sure control over material. I mean dictation. Milton dictating *Paradise Lost* in his blind years is a perfect example of what an exceptionally trained mind can do. Goethe and Stevenson both dictated in their latter years, certainly without sacrifice of quality. And from Homer to Tarkington those who have been afflicted with eye trouble have had to trust the spoken rather than the written word. E. Phillips Oppenheim learned the method out of choice. "My work", he says, "is accomplished with the aid of a secretary to whom I dictate my stories as they unfold themselves in my mind, in summer out of doors into a shorthand note-book, and in winter in my study on a typewriter. Many a time, earlier in life, when I used to write my stories with my own hand, I have found that my ideas would come so much faster than my fingers could work that I prayed for some more speedy method of transmission. My present method is not only an immense relief to me, but it enables me to turn out far more work than would be possible by any other means."

Edgar Wallace, they say, employed a staff of stenographers. In a workroom lined with volumes on criminology he dictated his mystery stories, starting at the end of the book or play, writing the solution, then building the rest on the pattern set by the last chapter. He drank tea continually while working and sometimes dictated to several stenographers at a sitting. When he was young and needed money Wallace used to write as many as twelve books a year.

And yet there must have been good reason why Conrad took three years to finish *Almayer's Folly*.

A. Edward Newton tells a story of Oscar Wilde at an English house party. Pleading the necessity of working while the humour was on he begged to be excused from joining the other guests. In the evening his hostess asked him what he had accomplished. "This morning", he said, "I put a comma in one of my poems." Surprised, the lady inquired whether the afternoon's work had been equally exhausting. "Yes," said Wilde, passing his hand wearily over his brow; "this afternoon I took it out again." No writer worth his salt but has suffered from this backing-and-filling process known as revision. "I have burnt more wit than I have kept", wrote Sterne. When the ideas begin to run smoothly they can so easily run away with us, leaving behind pages which in a colder mood seem full of extravagance. In the heat of composition it is not wise to halt for precision; that must come later, the search for the exact word, the smooth transition, the terse phrase that will save half a page. Ernest Hemingway, we are told, has written eleven different drafts of a short story before reaching even mid-satisfaction. One two weeks' revision occupying Senator Beveridge and two secretaries had the net result of eliminating one foot-note from the manuscript of his *Abraham Lincoln*. It is too painful to be funny. Revision is the worst possible drudgery; yet no book has been made full and rich without it.

VI

Whence comes the power to keep such creative work going day after day? What made Anthony Trollope keep on writing novels after three flat failures? Writing, I should say, is driven by nervous energy

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backed up by emotion. The emotion—the juice in the wire—may flow from personal revolt, pecuniary need, from moral conviction, love frustrated, ambitious vanity, and so forth. For the time being let us confine ourselves to the manifestation of nervous energy. In the first place how much of it may be taxed at a sitting? Let Trollope himself answer, who used to begin to write at 5:30 a.m., ending punctually at 8:30, when he got ready for his post-office duties. "All those I think who have lived as literary men—working daily as literary labourers—will agree with me that three hours a day will produce as much as a man ought to write. But then he should so have trained himself that he shall be able to work continuously during those three hours—so have tutored his mind that it shall not be necessary for him to sit nibbling his pen, and gazing at the wall before him. . . . It still is my custom, though of late I have become a little lenient to myself—to write with my watch before me, and to require from myself 250 words every quarter of an hour. But my three hours were not devoted entirely to writing. I always began my task by reading the work of the day before, an operation which would take me half an hour, and which consisted chiefly in weighing with my ear the sound of the words and phrases. I would strongly recommend this practice to all tyros in writing. . . . This division of time allowed me to produce over ten pages of an ordinary novel volume a day, and if kept up through ten months, would have given as its results three novels of three volumes each in the year."

Scott at Abbotsford likewise wrote in the early dawn, sitting in an easy chair with a desk top that pulled down to his lap. Mr. Oppenheim says the best time for writing is in the morning from about nine or nine-thirty till about one. But since that routine interfered with his golfing habits he schooled himself to work in the afternoon from four to seven. O. Henry, when not hounded by his editors, preferred the night; and I note that his stories were usually written in from one to three hours. It almost seems as if the candlepower runs dim after that interval.

At dawn or after midnight (and despite Amy Lowell I distrust midnight exuberance), in a deep chair with a writing board across the arms, sitting bolt upright to a table, or propped up on one elbow in bed, thus we fix ourselves to turn on the current. To get the desired seclusion it is sometimes necessary to hire a room of one's own, remote from relatives and the telephone. Established writers have their regular hours and will fight like mad to keep them inviolate. Mark Twain, whose profanity was marvellous, was never more profane than when interrupted in his morning routine at Quarry Farm. If on the other hand you are "writing on the side" you will probably have to find in the week-ends—from Friday night to Tuesday dawn—your hours of production. For it is dubious if your health will permit you to keep plugging at two jobs without a let-up.

Even an experienced writer will find the current varying greatly from day to day. There are times when nothing can stay the hand and there are times when almost nothing can make it go. I have heard Samuel Merwin say that in the latter emergency he deliberately re-types the last two pages of his previous day's work: it is his easiest way of priming the engine. I have heard an accomplished novelist remark that at the completion of a story she has felt so empty, so absolutely shallow of ideas, that she did not see how she could ever write again. If authors are subject to these intermittent tie-ups with all the attending despondency how much more likely is the beginner to be

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affected who has not had the long training to fall back on.

Nervous energy is too unstable, too unavailing without some driving force back of it. Mrs. Trollope, the mother of Anthony, commenced writing when she was fifty. She wrote one hundred and fourteen volumes—most of them popular—between that time and her death in her seventy-sixth year. She began that gallant effort when her family had been driven from pillar to post by debt—her husband broken and two children dying at her side with consumption. It is not ignoble to see in her emotional power a desperate need of cash.

In the opening pages of A. E. Housman's *Last Poems* this note appears: "I can no longer expect to be revisited by the continuous excitement under which in the early months of 1895 I wrote the greater part of my other book". Every writer of high or low degree has felt a touch of this excitement, and not infrequently it is associated with his very best work. Novelists have been known to burst into tears on the completion of a high spot not from relief nor indigestion (though both were probably felt), but from sheer force of the emotion which had been driving them forward, and some of which had been transmitted to the written page. This emotion, which may be derived from fairly simple or from fairly complex sources, is worth study. More than any other impulse it leaves its mark on the printed page.

There is first the testimony of a young demobilized German named Remarque who tried school-teaching while his wounds were healing and then gravitated into the automobile industry and thence to publishing: "In the Spring of 1928, I was employed as 'picture editor' of a periodical. The evenings I devoted to a variety of things. Thus for instance I made a number of attempts to write a play, but I never was very successful in that. I suffered from rather violent attacks of despair. When attempting to overcome these attacks, it happened that gradually, with full consciousness and systematically, I began to look for the cause of my depressions; just in consequence of this intentional analysis my mind reverted to my experiences during the war. I was able to observe quite similar phenomena in many acquaintances and friends. We all were—and are often to the present day—the victims of restlessness; we lack a final object, at times we are supersensitive, at times indifferent, but over and above all we are bereft of any joy. The shadows of the war oppressed us and particularly so when we did not think of it at all. On the very day on which these ideas swept over me, I began to write, and this without a lengthy reflection. This was continued for six weeks, every evening when I returned from the office, and by that time the book—*All Quiet on the Western Front*—had been completed. . . . To understand a situation is the best means of escaping it. This idea was also expressed and confirmed in many letters written by men of my own age. They all sensed the book not as a pessimistic product but as a relief; the conditions under which they had suffered as long as they had not been brought to their consciousness had lost their power over them, simply because they had been given here a clear-cut expression".

Thus under an emotional compulsion and out of a past that was wasting him Remarque wrote his story in six weeks' time. Indeed so powerfully was he driven that despite the international success of his novel he could not be convinced of his future as a writer. As he said in an interview, it did not seem possible that he could recapture that same mood again—nor that he could write another

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book without it. Yet we have *The Road Back* to show us that his batteries must somehow have been recharged.

In Katherine Mansfield we see another whose genius was brought to its fullest expression by the emotional disturbance of the war. Miss Mansfield's early stories appeared in 1909, but it was not until 1915 (as her husband, J. Middleton Murry, tells us) that her writing reached its final and most eloquent phase. "The war", he wrote, "had come as a profound spiritual shock to her, as it did to many less gifted writers of her generation. For a long period the chaos into which her thoughts and ideals and purposes had been flung remained unresolved. Then slowly her mind began to turn back towards her early childhood as a life which had existed apart from, and uncontaminated by, the mechanical civilization which had produced the war. The crucial moment was when, in 1915, her dearly loved younger brother arrived in England to serve as an officer. Her meeting with him formed, as it were, a point round which her changed attitude could crystallize. They talked over their early childhood for hours on end, and Katherine Mansfield resolved to dedicate herself to recreating life as she had lived and felt it in New Zealand. Her brother's death a month later confirmed her in her purpose, and shortly afterwards she left England for Bandol in the south of France, and began to work on a long story of her childhood days called *The Aloe*, which was published in a different and shortened form as *Prelude*."

I cannot help feeling that Miss Mansfield's compassionate stories were a very true memorial to the dead brother and to days that likewise had perished, a memorial the more beautiful because of the intensity with which it was wrought.

There is, of course, something of divine discontent in most literature that we value. You need not have to go to war to find it: there is an ample allotment for every citizen this side of paradise. Lafcadio Hearn once said, "I can only write my best when someone has been mean to me". If emotion born of discontent, or if some other spur only less moving, compels you to write please bear in mind the painstaking, the methodical industry which goes on in the factory of the mind; realize that the undertaking will involve your dependents in a severe economic hazard, that you yourself will probably have to suffer indigestion and insomnia, that you will have to produce and publish a good many thousand words each year and that you will have to go on producing just the same whether —as was the case with Mrs. Trollope— your partner is down and out and your children on the point of death. Realize that there is a "great and enervating weariness that all writers experience after finishing a book" and that only those of maturity and energy can recuperate and go back for more. Do not forget that talent—in the words of Buffon—is only long patience. Until you have developed methods that are tried and true, until you have matched your strength with increasing success against the world that accepts or rejects manuscripts you had better be content to endure the fretful business of writing on the side. And remember finally that of those writers who survive for us long after the machine wore out there are more who wrote to please themselves than those who wrote to please others.

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A PORTFOLIO

REVIEWING MADE EASY

by Walter R. Brooks

THE great trouble with book reviewing is that you have to read the books. Even if they were all good books it would be a nuisance. "I've *got* to read *The Contingent Virgin*, that new novel of Bernard O'Nurts's, tonight," you grumble. And although you look forward eagerly, as you will say in your review, "to each new volume from the pen of O'Nurts", whom you consider "one of the most important figures in contemporary American literature", at once this book becomes required reading, as dull in prospect as the Five Foot Shelf to the aspirant to a raconteur's license.

Unfortunately every writer is not an O'Nurts. You wouldn't read for pleasure a tenth of the books you review. It's not that they haven't their excellences, nor that they won't please others whose tastes are different from yours. Catholic as your taste may be naturally, and universal as you have tried to make it, there will be lots of good books that you just won't like. You're sick of them by the time you've read them, and then where is the enthusiasm into which you must dip your pen to write a fair review?

In view of all this, it is my contention that you can write a better and more entertaining review if you haven't read the book at all. The book unread, like the song unheard, is sweeter. Read the blurb, dip into the pages here and there, and then write your appraisal. This is what might be called "creative reviewing", surely a higher form of art than the usual slavish adherence to the text. Why should not the modern artistic trend away from realism be found in reviewing, as well as in painting and sculpture?

This trend has not yet made itself felt in reviewing, but you will find it in nearly every other form of prose, and particularly in poetry. A young poet said to me once, speaking of another's work in which I had been able to find no single coherent sentence, that he did think So-and-so should have given his poems titles that had some relation to the subject matter. I am still sufficiently academic to think that the portrait should be faintly recognizable. Reviews of books by Edgar Rice Burroughs and Oswald Spengler should not be interchangeable. Complete freedom is chaos. But I do believe that reviewing must break out of its conventional mould if it is ever to become an art rather than a craft. And the first step is to stop reading the books.

It is perfectly possible to write a blanket review that will cover any book that comes in.

Suppose, for instance, you know nothing about the book but the author and title: *The Life and Times of Henry Gasswitz*, by Peter Piper. You have never heard of Gasswitz. He may be a real person: a Revolutionary general, a Czechoslovakian statesman, a German scientist. In that case the book is a biography. But he may not be a real person at all: the book may be a novel, either contemporary or

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historical. It may even be a narrative poem. In fact it may be almost anything.

So you start out. "The author of this extremely interesting book has chosen in Henry Gasswitz a figure which will at once engage the reader's sympathy. Despite the particular and peculiar circumstances under which he worked out his destiny, Gasswitz had that common factor which makes him one with all humanity, and so we identify ourselves with him as we read; his struggles become our struggles; we exult in his triumphs and taste the bitterness of his defeats."

All right so far, you see. You have only said that Gasswitz was a man. Of course if it is a book about a dog named Henry Gasswitz you are out of luck, but the chances are against that. No publisher would put out a dog story under such a title.

But Gasswitz is also certainly the most important character in the book, and the other characters are therefore less important. So you continue. "Gasswitz becomes to us in these admirable pages a clear, three dimensional figure, alive and real. This is no portrait, but the man himself, as he lived and breathed. Almost inevitably, therefore, the other figures in the book seem more shadowy, less clearly realized; there is at times an unreality about them that, though implicit in the author's method, none the less makes the reader wish for an amplification that would have defined them more sharply, made them less blurred, more alive."

Still perfectly safe. But since the title speaks of the "times" of Gasswitz, they too must be considered. "But though these minor characters are sometimes indistinct, they, with the scenes through which they move, do form an integral whole, an environment carefully and truthfully pictured, which while it explains Gasswitz himself, makes him more significant. Apart from this rich background, he would be less intelligible to us, and therefore less human; with it, he becomes at once a personality and a symbol."

And now since you have praised the book rather highly, you ought to add a little of the vinegar of criticism. After all, the book may be pretty rotten. But criticism must be done with a delicate hand, for while you can always safely praise the wrong child, if you punish the wrong child you're in for a bad time. Fortunately there is a simple formula for this that timid reviewers frequently use even in writing of books which they have read and of which they have formed an opinion. It is simply to qualify a statement so that before you have finished with it you have flatly contradicted everything you previously said.

"It seems rather ungracious to pass strictures on what is in so many ways an excellent piece of work, yet it must be said that the author at times becomes so meticulous in building up his background that the action is impeded. This wordiness takes the edge off the action and creates suspense in the wrong place. Yet there is a delicate strength, a real conciseness, even where it seems the most verbose, so that one reads on without being too irritatingly conscious of the change of tempo." This, you see, denies itself and says nothing, though it is perhaps not the best possible example, since the charge of verbosity is one that can safely be brought against almost any author.

At least two slaps, however, should be administered to the author, so that the review will appear to have some critical value. So you add: "A more serious fault is evident in the handling of the dramatic values. An odd effect of frustration is given by the hesitation with which each time the author approaches a climax. Conflicting issues are never clearly enough stated or worked out, with the result that the moral and social implications of Gass-

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witz's career are left to be interpreted by the reader. This may be deliberate on the author's part. Life, he may say, is like that. Yet we cannot but feel that it is a mistake. Gasswitz himself might have felt this confusion, but the author owes his reader some definite affirmations, implicit if not explicit".

This doesn't mean much, but it sounds well. You could of course just as well have said that the author hasn't used his material to the best advantage, or that there is little originality in his treatment of an old theme, or that the book rather peters out at the end—things that are true of almost any book.

But now, as you've rather lost sight of the fact that the book may be a biography, you add: "We do not wish, however" (and please note how useful a word "however" is when you don't want to say anything) "to suggest that the author's method of presentation is at fault. He is, as he should be, both biographer and novelist. In recent years the methods of biography and fiction have come closer together: the former is less bound by the tyranny of unimportant facts; the latter less romantically untrue to life. Sound scholarship lies behind both. And so the Gasswitz that Mr. Piper shows you is, you feel, the true Gasswitz, because he is true to life".

Now this is a perfectly good review as it stands, but you may wish to embroider it a little. If you think that there is a chance that the book may be poetry, you can speak of its high lyrical quality. "The book sings; it has a splendid rhythmic sweep." It is the fortune-teller's trick, you see, of feeling your way with ambiguities. If you're good at telling fortunes, you'll be good at writing blind reviews.

Then there are a number of good tricks that will help you. You can review the book negatively, in terms of what it is not. "We miss in this volume the tragic depth of Shakespeare, the light and airy grace of De Whoozis." In a recent review, for instance, we find this: "Dos Passos is more imaginative than Dreiser, more intelligent than Sinclair Lewis". You could just about as sensibly add that he is younger than Calvin Coolidge and has fewer whiskers than Walt Whitman. But such phrases as "lacking the imaginative intuition of Balzac (or James or Hardy or who you will), he nevertheless, etc.", sound swell.

Another good trick is to lift phrases out of other reviews, changing the wording when the reviewer is too definite. "He selects what is fairly typical and writes about it with understanding as well as detachment." "The action fits without wedging, and the warmth of the author's style dissipates the artificiality of one or two incidents." "If the book cannot quite be cleared of sentimentality, that sentimentality remains inherent in the characters; Mrs. —— allows her story to tell itself." Or you can take this one: "She has so very genuine a talent for spying out the drama of the commonplace that her people and places have that palpable quality which is so often lacking in fiction written about very simple folk and very rural spots." Take out the words "of the commonplace" and "about very simple people and very rural spots", and you have a sentence that will apply to any book.

There are many other tricks. But creative reviewing should employ them sparingly. All the arts have tricks, but it is only the craftsman who uses them habitually.

The difference between creative reviewing and the old-fashioned kind, is the difference between the taxidermist who stuffs an animal and the scientist who reconstructs one from a tibia and two metatarsal bones. You don't have to skin and eviscerate your book; you have merely to make your portrait of it plausible. It's a lot easier, just as modern art is a lot easier. And it gives you a lot more fun. And time to read the books you want to read.

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LITERARY CHIROPODY

by Fairfax Downey

Footnotes, some believe, are the horrid squeakings which arise when an author puts a brand new pair of shoes on his brain child. Others consider them a variety of the prints which great men, according to a poet[1], leave behind them on the sands of time.

In certain works, of course, such as Shakespearian commentaries, footnotes are the very essence of the scheme. The learned commentators take off their stockings and go wading through the text in bare footnotes with ponderous enjoyment. Many a translator would be crippled in his pilgrimage unless he donned one pair after another of size 12 E footnotes, and who can object to the extensive use of such habiliments by Burton in his *Arabian Nights* or by Yule in his *Marco Polo*? Historians, too, must be allowed some indulgence. So may biographers. An army of books, as Napoleon did not say, marches on its footnotes.

But let all beware of too copious annotation, one of the deadly sins of literature. Yielding to its fatal fascination is easy and many fall. Some texts are sprinkled with references indicated by nonpareil 1's and 2's and 3's because, perhaps, these figures (along with checks for royalties) are the one form of mathematics which the average writer can master.

Not a few may surrender to the lure of the asterisk. If non-novelists, they are unable to type a string of the things, followed by a new paragraph beginning, "Next morning, John and Valerie were wakened by the sunlight". So in psychological compensation, they joyously punch the asterisk key on their typewriters as an indication*.

Others cannot resist showing that they entered college in the days when Latin still was required. They must have their *e.g., idem, loc. cit., sic, et cetera.* Still others are victims of typographical temptation. They take an unhallowed delight in seeing the bottom of the pages of their book adorned with those products of the printer's case which are known as conventional symbols. They cultivate curleycues§, they are partial to paragraph signs¶, and they are death on daggers.† This is too much. "There ought to be a law."[2]

Yet these are mere foibles. Happily they have been disappearing gradually since the dawn of the era when even well born and exceedingly erudite authors brought themselves to the point of accepting royalties in filthy lucre from their publishers. Nowadays the majority of scribes nourish in their bosoms the hope, however faint, that their book will sell. A means to that desirable end is the convenience of one's readers. Tread too often or too clumsily on their toes with footnotes and they will decline the next dance.

If to footnote or not to footnote is the question, the wise author will find parallel counsel in Dr. Richard M. Smith's advice on travelling with children: "In the first place, don't". But in numerous instances, the legitimacy of footnotes is not to be denied. An author may feel impelled to establish the soundness of his scholarship. Footnotes are the "X" which mark the spot where the body of his research is found. An appendix will not suffice him; so many of us never notice an appendix, literary or anatomical, until our attention is rather painfully called to it. So notes must be made, and providing they be set down informatively, not vaingloriously, no blame can be attached.

[1] Longfellow, none other.

* Of an utterly inconsequential footnote.

§ *e.g.*

¶ *idem.*

† "Is this dagger that I see before me?"—Shakespeare's *Lady Mac.*

[2] *Anon.*

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To convey valuable data closely related to the text, yet not included therein for reasons of coherence, style, and so on—there indeed footnotes stand on their own feet. In further extenuation is the literary honesty. Credit to sources where credit is due is not always adequately served by polite bows in preface or bibliography, in the opinion of various careful writers. They make a grateful and courteous obeisance on the spot with a footnote. No grace before or after meals for them. They give thanks at the moment of partaking of the tasty and wholesome material which some other hand has dished up.

Let us concede, then, that footnotes are sometimes a necessary evil, and what can we do about it? First of all, we can hold the things down to a minimum. As already intimated, authors are apt to run wild on annotation. They go in for notes to a note. There is an instance of two hundred notes to one chapter of a Shakespearian critique; on reading proof, the writer decided to omit Note 147, whereupon there was vast resetting and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Readers quickly are surfeited with footnotes, and none can contemplate with equanimity the spectacle of a page with one line of text upon a massive base of footnotes.

The question next arises: how will you have your footnotes? What location gives the reader the best footnote ease? At the bottom of the page on which the reference occurs? At the end of the chapter? At the end of the book? On a margin? Between the lines? Or may they be incorporated in the text?

To that last, the answer, I think, is "Yes, whenever possible". But when they put a heavy limp in a limpid style, down with long, modifying phrases! Perish parentheses! Better let some notes sink by their weight to the bottom of the page. There let them be proportionate and illuminating. Still even the gentlest reader grows just a bit cross, when an imperative symbol summons his eye from a stirring passage to travel down to the cellar of the page[3], there to shovel a notefull of coal designed to get up more steam in the author's furnace. Possibly he is even less soothed when the even ranks of type are split asunder to admit a note in nonpareil[4]. The golden thread of continuity of interest is all too often snapped. A peruser may not be good at knots. Nor will the typographical expert be pleased.

Similar objections obtain to annotation on page margins. Even though the paper-generous publisher now furnishes more margin than they were asking on Wall Street in 1928, notes printed there must needs be too brief, in too tiny type or too ungainly to serve well their purpose. Also such are the bane of printers, and no canny author will bite the hand that sets him.

Arguments of inconvenience and interruption may be made against notes at the end of each chapter. As for notes collected at the end of a volume, only hardened travelers will shuttle back and forth between the home text and that distant bourne. Readers who, ignoring the reference symbols, never reach that lode until they finish the book, may find the nuggets unidentifiable and worthless.

Obviously, any solution of the footnote problem will involve a series of compromises. We must hew to the line and let the fewest stumbling blocks fall where they may. For volumes perforce heavily annotated I know of no better plan than that suggested by the editor of this magazine. Here a distinction is made between varieties of notes. Those which are closely connected with the text by way of amplification or modification, yet disproportionate if included therein, would be

[3] Like this. Annoying, what?
[4] Something on this order.

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placed at the bottom of the page, indicated by conventional symbols. Such notes as bibliographical references, minor points, allusions of secondary relevancy, alternative readings, and so forth would be relegated to the rear of the book. Numbers in the page margins opposite the line containing the annotated subject would serve as directions to the appendix. Thus would be provided the necessary scholarly apparatus, and the reader would not be moved to accuse the author of trying to train the perusing eye to follow the curves in a depression chart.

Lighter works permitting economy though not elimination of footnotes seem to demand a simpler formula on the score of readability. Let source credit be given in preface and bibliography. Let the text carry its legal load of references, no more. Let each page stand gloriously free of sign or symbol until the end of the chapter is reached. There may be ranged the footnotes on that chapter indicated by page and line number and the quotation of the phrase, clause or sentence under reference. This would be sufficient identification for material just read and fresh in mind. Ocular gymnastics on the several pages would be avoided. The breathing spell which the average reader takes at the end of a chapter should give him wind enough to leap the note chasm to the succeeding chapter.

With the shorter footnotes thus taken care of, more extensive remarks may be printed in an appendix and referred thereto from the chapter ends. Each one of these longer notes should if possible be written as well and entertainingly as a separate essay. Far too many readers shy off from an appendix as they would from one who just had asked, "Did I ever tell you about my operation?"

Striking the keynote of footnotes, it may be declared that brevity is their soul as well as wit's.

JIG SAW

by Maud Hart Lovelace

The novelist looked at his typewriter keys,
And he thought of those H's, those F's and those G's,
Those R's and those S's which, properly pounded,
Would bring forth his book; and was dazed and confounded!
Those very same keys, pounded over and over,
And his book would be finished, and he'd be in clover!
Those very same keys . . . but in right combination!
Ah, that was the thought which caused suffocation!
Those hundreds of "buts", those thousands of "ands",
Would they know where to go when evoked by his hands?
Those "Heavens!" and "Holds!" which men once put a quill to,
Those tender "I love yous" which readers would thrill to,
They were there in the keys . . . would they jump to their places?
The keys lifted unconcerned black and white faces.

CONNIE AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

by Miriam Allen deFord

CONNIE, who is by way of being a beginning author, was just back from a week-end visit to an old friend.

"Give me a light," she sighed, throwing off her hat. "I'm glad to be back. That's one trip I can't enthuse over."

"For a would-be literary light," I remarked

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coldly, striking a match, "you speak atrocious English. It may get by some editors—I've seen even worse that did—but it won't get by me. 'Enthuse' is a horrid barbarism, which I hope never to see in the dictionary."

"Become enthusiastic, then, if you consider that more correct. Anyway—"

"If a thing is correct, it can't be more correct. It is either correct or it isn't. But I suppose I shouldn't blame you. I can hardly pick up a book nowadays without finding things that are more true, more accurate, or even more perfect, than something else."

"Exactly. No less than twenty of them, probably, in that very heavy tome on your lap. So why jump on me? As I was saying—"

"No fewer than twenty, Connie. 'Less' of quantity and 'fewer' of numbers. Well—"

Connie's eyes snapped dangerously.

"Well, firstly, do you want to listen to me at all?"

"'First', my dear, is both an adjective and an adverb. First, secondly, and thirdly, I always want to hear you."

"All right. Check and double check. As I was going to say, I had a rotten time. Any objection to slang, in its proper place? Thanks. When I got to the city I expected Mabel to meet me. She wasn't there, and it's a wonder I contacted her at all."

I groaned.

"Sorry, I know that's vile," smiled Connie penitently. "I couldn't get in touch with her, or whatever you please. I went to a hotel where she always used to stop—don't shoot, I mean where she used to stay—but she wasn't there. And I couldn't find her anywhere in the vicinity—'scuse: in the neighbourhood. Was I aggravated?"

"If you were, I don't see the connection. 'Aggravated' means 'made worse'. I presume you were irritated, though."

"Just plain sore, I assure you. Finally I found her in the dinky little apartment she's taken—there must have been some mix-up over my telegram. My dear, you should see that place! A ferocious rent, and the place doesn't even provide properly for the necessities of life."

"How could it, my love? You and Mabel were both born, even as I, with the necessities all provided for. I am willing to believe that its provision of the necessaries was inadequate, however."

"Have it your own way. One of the *necessaries*, to me, is leisure: and by this time it was so late in the day that we had a hectic time getting in everything she'd planned for me."

"You have a hectic time every twenty-four hours of your life, Connie darling. 'Hectic' means 'habitual' or 'constitutional', and not a thing else. Where people got the idea it meant 'feverish', I can't imagine—from a hectic fever, I suppose; which indicated in the first place one which was regular, daily, and accustomed."

"As you please. I'm back at last, thank heaven, and now I suppose I shall have to write Mabel an utterly disingenuous note telling her how much I enjoyed myself. She's so meticulous about such—now what have I done?"

"'Meticulous', Connie," I replied wearily, "does *not* mean 'careful', 'scrupulous', or 'fastidious', as people without sufficient respect for their native tongue try to make it. It originally meant 'timid'; it can also mean 'overscrupulous', 'excessively careful'. Go ahead and write your letter."

"The way I feel, if I write it today, I'm afraid it's going to be pretty terse."

"I hope so. 'Terse' means 'polished', not 'curt' or—Help!" I dodged a well-aimed pillow.

"Cut it," retorted Connie succinctly, open-

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ing the desk. "I don't pretend to be as cultivated as some people I might mention."

"Fields are cultivated, not people," I remarked loftily as I reached the door. "People are cultured—sometimes."

"Rough-and-ready is my motto." Connie curled up on the couch with her note-paper and fountain-pen. "I'm not as particular as all that—oh, all right—not so particular, if you prefer. I don't write or say 'different than', or 'kind of a', or 'anybody . . . they', and I let it go at that. You and Hamlet can have the rest—'words, words, words'."

"Hamlet", I remarked sweetly, closing the door behind me, "should have investigated the subject of words a bit more intensively after having mentioned them. You may recall that Polonius then asks him, 'What is the matter?' —and he replies, 'Between who?'"

EX-EDITOR

by Margaret E. Sangster

A BROAD desk with plenty of pencils (always well sharpened) and plenty of blotters and plenty of clips—that, to me, had always been the complete editorial existence. Interviewing editors across such a desk had always filled me with a rare sort of envy. I—who had to sharpen my own pencils, who could never find a blotter when the ink bottle tipped over—felt that editors led pretty close to an ideal life. . . .

And then, all at once, fate made *me* into an editor! And for a number of months I sat behind just such a desk, and had a hand in shaping the destiny of a magazine. And I found that problems came up that could not be solved by a score of sharpened pencils, and that griefs came up that could not be repaired with blotters, and that there were some cross sections of an editor's life that could not be fastened together with a clip!

I was an editor for just about a year. A year during which I learned a lot of things that writers have no way of knowing. But we won't go into that *here*.

I suppose that the average writer seldom gets to be an editor. Having been an editor, I don't see why a writer with any of the elements of success should edit. When writing has rewards to offer they are very generous—I signed some vouchers with a shaking hand! I know of a few highly successful editors who are also successful writers—but I've noticed that, as the editorial days go on, the writing more and more comes to take second place. There isn't time to serve two masters in any business.

The average writer—probably from matter of choice—seldom gets to be an editor. The average writer consequently doesn't know how lucky he is.

To be a writer one must be, I should say, more or less sensitive. I don't mean sensitive in the sense of having easily hurt feelings. I mean sensitive to the feelings of others. But your average editor has to curb that sensitivity if he—or she—hopes to survive.

As I sat behind my ex-desk, the old dramatic instinct at many times got the better of me. When a writer came in with a much thumbed manuscript in his hand, and told me in a shaky voice that the rent was unpaid, and that the baby wasn't going to have any Christmas tree this year unless the manuscript was bought, it became pretty hard not to write his story into my own mental scenario. My emotions rose to engulf me, and it became a desperate matter. If I turned down the manuscript, I was taking a Christmas tree from a baby—that's what it amounted to. And yet the money with which the manuscript had to be purchased was not my money. It wasn't even remotely my money.

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It was something with which I had been entrusted. Something that I must spend vicariously—and with wisdom.

The mechanical problems of editing did not trouble me—much! They took their place, one after another. Your editor usually has very adequate assistants—I did. Sometimes the assistants are so adequate that your editor feels foolish. Again, I did! Being, as I said before, a writer, my knowledge of fiction helped me to conceal from some of my assistants how little I knew about the actual business of going to press, or as the case might be, not going to press. It wasn't that the business troubled me; I knew that if stories or articles came out the wrong size, somebody would make the size right. I knew that capable fingers would either build up—or cut down—the offending manuscript. I also knew that my rather shaky spelling didn't matter—my proofreader would see that the pages of the magazine were spelled correctly. No, mechanical details weren't important! It was the Christmas-treeless baby who eventually drove me back to a lap board and a fountain pen.

Perhaps the people who come into an editor's office may best be divided into five classes. Four of the classes do not entirely come under the head of relaxation. There arrives first of all (and often stays longest!) the prosperous author who looks slightly down on your magazine, who is willing to sell to you simply because his other markets are overcrowded, because business isn't booming. Because the editor who usually snaps up his work has just left town for a long vacation. This kind of author usually wears mink, or the masculine equivalent of mink.

Incidentally, this kind of author is the easiest kind to resist. Even if your denial sends such a one to a park bench for a long, lonely night, there's still the mink coat to keep him warm. Turning down the manuscript brought in by a prosperous, condescending author is not too difficult. The really difficult time comes when the manuscript is so good that you have to buy it. *That's hard!* That requires great self-control and, also, great strength of character!

The second type of visitor is the poor, proud, patient writer, who admits that while of course he doesn't write very well, he does it for the wife and the kiddies, or for the dear old mother, or for the little nephew who has to go through college, or for any one of a score of different reasons! This author usually expresses himself rather less ably than does the youngest and most inexperienced secretary in the office. But such is the hypnotic power of an eye that has known sacrificial tears that the average editor quails before that eye—and is left with a frayed manuscript on his desk. I found, as an editor, that I could not be really strong-minded with this type of author.

The third type is bright and helpful—a person who will go to any length to get you something you don't want. Who comes breezily in, after you've sent a secretary out to tell her that you just left for Bermuda. Who always says, "Your secretary told me you were out of town, but I happened to see you this morning and so I just knew that your secretary had made a mistake!"

This author tells you about a darling article that you can't do without, and pats your feeble protests on the head until they die of their bruises. Curiously enough, the average go-getting author is a "she".

Incidentally, I must say here that I was astonished to know that the people whose work I rejected often took it as a personal insult. I am quite honest in saying that I don't think I ever bought anything that I did not like

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from a person that I did like. Or turned down anything that I did like from a person with whom I had nothing in common. Of course, there were times when the force of circumstance (we'll call it that!) brought a slight pressure to bear upon these ex-editorial shoulders, but none of us is absolutely perfect! . . .

But to go on. On to the fourth type of interruption that wanders into the average editor's life. This fourth type isn't a writer at all—it (he or she!) comes under a different heading, a heading that might have the title, "social acquaintance". If the editor is a woman, the visitor is apt to be another woman who just can't understand why, when it's such a lovely day, the work of putting a magazine together must go on. She has tickets, usually, for either a play or a movie, and she purrs, "The matinee would do you so much good, my dear! Why, you look all fagged out. Really, there are little lines around your eyes I never noticed before!"

Or, if she hasn't any tickets, she'll say, "I'm trying to get up a rubber of bridge. *But* why can't you come this afternoon? Well, let's make it tomorrow, then—or the day after, or in fact any day that's convenient. You know that line about all work and no play——"

So it goes.

Occasionally, and this is almost the saddest thing that can happen, when this type of visitor appears she has a friend who has another friend who is just learning to write —who is, perhaps, taking a short story course, or who has done the most beautiful place-cards in verse for her mother's silver wedding, or something like that. And your friend wants you to give an opinion on the merits of the embryo short stories or the place-cards. You're caught between not knowing whether to encourage somebody who'll never get anywhere anyway, or to be truthful and, consequently, set down as an old crosspatch.

These social visitors think you are so clever, running a home and an office, too!

"But, my dear," they murmur—oh, how insidiously!— "do you think your husband is really looking as well as he should? Maybe it is because you haven't the time to spare for him. Maybe his diet isn't quite right, and you're too busy working to notice it."

I don't think a male editor suffers from this form of visitation as acutely as a female editor does. Most editors, when they are men, can manage to break off any interview when it gets tiresome. Most of them can be more blunt and outspoken with their friends. And then, of course, the majority of a male editor's friends are in business themselves, which is apt to shorten their calls. If you know what I mean!

Last but not least comes the person who really has something valuable about which to talk. The blessed person who has something interesting and desirable to sell you. The author who is usually a good writer and knows it, or who has a good idea and knows he can't handle it himself, and is willing to let someone else write it. This is the author who talks cleverly and brilliantly, who knows what he's about, and doesn't waste time in letting you know what he's about! This author is a bright oasis in the weary sands of a desert. He—or she—is as refreshing as a cool shower on a July day.

Oh, being an editor entails a lot more than a desk and plenty of blotters and half a hundred well sharpened pencils. The job carries with it a whole lot of responsibility and heartache and a constant succession of interruptions. But then of course life is like that, too. Full of interruptions, crowded with responsibility and twinges at the heart. Life is like that, whether you're an editor or not!

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WHEN LITERATURE WENT TO SEA

TAKEN BY THOSE THREE IMMORTAL MARINERS, COOPER, DANA, MELVILLE

by Elsie A. Parry

In these decadent days of ocean travel, the watchwords of which are luxury and speed, it is possible to descend by means of flight upon interminable flight of hot, narrow, ladder-like stairs into a liner's torrid abyss, where a single man, lounging indifferently under the diminishing tunnel of a ventilator, keeps watch over the huge oil-burning boilers; it is possible, moreover, to mount those swaying flights and arrive on deck once more with a white costume unsoiled by either soot or grease. It is a far cry from the mechanical perfection that such a condition implies to Dana's fo'c'sle where everything was "wet and uncomfortable, black and dirty, heaving and pitching" with "that inexpressible sickening smell from the steerage caused by the shaking up of the bilge-water in the hold". It is a far cry from the modern captain who has time to exchange blithe nothings with fair passengers in love with the gold braid of his authority to Ahab of "the steady, ivory stride", who found his frenzied crew in indissoluble, fanatic league against the White Whale. But the sea is still the same—the sea whose clean wide reaches Cooper loved, whose strength and magnetism Dana knew, and whose unassailable mystery tormented the morbid sensitiveness of Herman Melville. These three men, whose kinship lay in their love of the sea, demonstrated, each in his own individual fashion, the possibilities of that turgid vastness as an integral part of a sustained narrative, not mere background lugged in upon the scene, but a controlling factor in the lives of men whose most trivial actions and most important decisions were alike under its impartial influence.

Do not suppose for a moment that they "discovered" the sea as a literary field—the sea is an old field and it has been cultivated ever since Ulysses sailed "the unharvested deep". English literature is filled with references to it, from Beowulf, whose "foamy-necked ship, sped by the wind, went over the billowy sea", to Conrad, who owes much to the pioneering of Cooper. Hakluyt's *Navigations*, Raleigh, Shakespeare, the inimitable Samuel Pepys, Wycherley, Congreve, Defoe, Swift's *Gulliver*, Smollett's naval portrait gallery, Fielding's *Voyage to Lisbon, The Pirate* of Scott, Marryat—to skip hurriedly down the years, leaving out entirely the poetical references, which are legion. It is a long and interesting list. And all that long and interesting list was the rich heritage of the Americans, Cooper, Dana, and Melville.

It is not surprising that an insular people like the English, dependent upon the sea for commerce and defence, should incorporate it into their literature—its beauty, its mystery, its fury; but it is astonishing that life on the sea, from the sailor's viewpoint, should have so long escaped the novelist's attention as a

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vehicle for narrative. Once the way was shown, imitators of Cooper, who gave sea-fiction its first enlivening touch, found a wealth of material for their tales.

Doubtless you have seen many little Japanese prints in which the ubiquitous Fuji-Yama seems to be an almost indispensable factor in the landscape, but is usually a distant factor, undistinguished by detail. Until about 1820 the sea was the Fuji-Yama of English literature, as indisputably a part of its scenic background as the encircling water is a part of England's position on the globe, but it was lightly sketched on the whole, and viewed, more often than not, from the safe precincts of the shore. Polite literature had represented the sea as the lifeless, maddening waste of *The Ancient Mariner*; it was coupled invariably with dangers and afflictions, with *mal de mer* and discomfort; it was the pirate's haven, the man-of-war's pathway to glory; it was the explorer's will-o'-the-wisp, the chance traveller's *bête noire*; but it was seldom, if ever, the native heath of hundreds and thousands of ordinary sailors, who passed their lives calmly within a plank's thickness of destruction, whose pleasures, sorrows, and wrongs were compressed, with a resulting intensification, within the narrow confines of a ship.

We have Cooper's own words in a later preface (1849) to *The Pilot*, expressing his doubts about the success of a story whose scene for the first time was laid on the sea and whose interest turned wholly upon maritime adventure. He says:

> The author had many misgivings concerning the success of the undertaking, after he had made some progress in the work; the opinions of his different friends being anything but encouraging. One would declare that the sea could not be made interesting; that it was tame, monotonous, and the less he got of it the better. The women very generally protested that such a book would have the odour of bilgewater, and that it would give them the maladie de mer. Not a single individual among all those who discussed the merits of the project, within the range of the author's knowledge, either spoke, or looked, encouragingly. It is probable that all these persons anticipated a signal failure.

Before Cooper, the few nautical novelists were all of the school of Smollett, who, with an empty purse in one pocket and an unpublished tragedy in another, had been impressed by the gang to gather, afloat, "copy" for his facile and vitriolic pen, and whose *Roderick Random* long served as a model for sea stories. His highly coloured naval characters, engaging in a series of coarse adventures which are characteristic of the picaresque novel of his age, reflected life at sea in His Majesty's service as an exaggerated horror unrelieved by its more commonplace aspects. Scott's only story dealing with the sea is *The Pirate* and *its* scene is laid on land. Seafaring characters like Dirk Hatteraick, whose "countenance was bronzed by a thousand conflicts with the northeast wind", and Nanty Ewart are only subordinate. Scott was essentially a landsman and his deficiencies are a landsman's deficiencies. Dana in the opening chapter of *Two Years Before the Mast* says that prior to Cooper practically "all the books professing to give life at sea have been written by persons who have gained their experience as naval officers or passengers" and that such "must take a very different view of the whole matter from that which would be taken by a common sailor".

With *The Pilot*, then, Cooper can be said to have launched a new variety of sea fiction. *The Pilot* and *Red Rover* made the sea a place of romance instead of fear; Dana's *Two Years Before the Mast* reached romance through the agency of prosaic fact, a book as "entertaining

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as a well-contrived fiction and as luminous as poetry"; and *Moby Dick* captured within the two covers of a book the sea of fact and the sea of man's imagination in a tremendous epic swing.

Cooper, Dana, and Melville represent three outstanding tendencies in sea writing: the romance, pure and simple; the literary "log-book", based wholly or in part upon actual fact; and the psychological study. The gap between Cooper and Melville is tremendous, the whole wide difference between the objective and the subjective; between running narrative and profound analysis; between a sloven, confused, often involved style that descends not infrequently to downright bad grammar, and one which has the richness of the early seventeenth century, lucid, eloquent, grand, and yet, by a swift change of pace, capable of homely reportorial narrative. The progression from Cooper to Melville reflects the nineteenth-century tendency of the novel in other fields; it charts the transition from the novel of incident to that concerned with the study of character and with the conflict between nature and man. It is the evolution from the simple and spontaneous to the complex and self-conscious.

Two Years Before the Mast occupies a strategic middle ground between Cooper's sea novel and *Moby Dick*, partaking to some degree of the qualities of each. I suppose the inclusion of Dana's masterpiece in a fiction category is open to dispute, but the fact remains that no artificial literary plot could boast a better curve than that made by the unadorned events of the author's memorable voyage. Dana intended his book to be a descriptive narrative of objective fact; it is that, but it is also much more, for Dana achieved, quite without design, a self-expression in which the unconscious element is as important as the conscious.

An analysis of Cooper's success with *The Pilot* and *Red Rover*, the most popular of his sea tales, offers no complications in spite of the author's early misgivings. Cooper had a story to tell and he told it, with a sublime disregard of novel technique and the demands of the English language; he told it successfully, however, to the discomfiture of hounding critics and to the everlasting delight of every boy, no matter what his age. Cooper, who went to sea at twenty, knew ships and sailors. His vivid sea pictures convey the suggestions of vastness and limitless space; his common sailors are invested with more interest and reality than the heroes themselves. "Cooper", as one critic says, "does not describe the sea; he takes us thither. We feel the salt mist in our face; the deck slants; we hear the wind in the rigging; the rhythm of the long waves on the open ocean." The salt of Cooper's sea never loses its savour; his tars are real sailors, from furzy brown chests, half-bare, to rolling gait, which Leigh Hunt describes as "a sort of heavy lightness of foot, like the combination tread of a waggoner and a dancing master".

Cooper interprets the thoughts, emotions, and motives of his characters by means of their actions. To describe these significantly is the high attainment of the romancer; and however much sophisticated critics may deplore Cooper's lack of profundity, his lack of any key to unlock human hearts, the looseness of his plots, and the absence of his humour, the continued steady demand for his books gives the lie to their studied pronouncements. Cooper's supreme merit is the vital interest of his best stories. He knew the art of suspense and the art of movement. In *A Gossip on Romance* Stevenson wrote:

> Now this is one of the natural appetites with which any lively literature has to count. The desire for knowledge, I had almost added the

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desire for meat, is not more deeply seated than this demand for fit and striking incident. . . . English people of the present day are apt, I know not why, to look somewhat down upon incident, and reserve their admiration for the clink of teaspoons and the accents of the curate. . . . It is one thing to remark and dissect, with the most cutting logic, the complications of life and of the human spirit; it is quite another to give them body and blood in the story of Ajax. . . . The first is literature, but the second is something besides, for it is likewise art.

There comes to every man an hour when he is irresistibly impelled to take to the woods or to go to sea. Next to doing either is to read Cooper.

"It is a strange thing that in sea voyages where there is nothing to be seen but sky and sea, men should make diaries. . . ." Thus Francis Bacon in his essay *Of Travel*. Either Bacon never took a sea voyage or else seasickness must have laid him low. Or perhaps he suffered from a mental myopia induced possibly by "the confinement, cold, motion, noise, and odour" of which Emerson once complained. How else account for Bacon's contempt for sea and sky as objects of visual attention? What Dana saw in them and in the little brig which he called home for so long, fills more than four hundred goodly pages. And what pages they are. I wonder how many "rocking-chair mariners" have doubled the Horn with Dana since 1851 when *Two Years Before the Mast* was published; how many have lain on the boom with him at night admiring the beauty of the ship.

There rose up from the water, supported only by the small black hull, a pyramid of canvas, spreading out far beyond the hull, and towering up almost, as it seemed in the indistinct night air, to the clouds. The sea was as still as an inland lake; the light trade-wind was gently and steadily breathing from astern; the dark blue sky was studded with the tropical stars; there was no sound but the rippling of the water under the stem; and the sails were spread out, wide and high . . .

Vicarious but none the less poignant sensation. But if you have clung, as I have, for twelve unrelieved hours to a lurching wheel in a nasty quartering sea, or if you have stared with horrified, unbelieving eyes at green water pouring through the starboard ports, you can tread with even clearer understanding the pitching deck of the *Pilgrim* in a gale that "blew like scissors and thumbscrews".

Richard Henry Dana, Jr., who came of an old Massachusetts family, left Harvard in his sophomore year to ship before the mast in the hope of curing an affection of the eyes. He brought to the rough and difficult life of a sailor a sensitive, highly-strung nature, cultivated tastes, and an education that had taken cognizance of Spenser, Byron, Scott, and Wordsworth. Coupled with a landsman's inexperience, it was as unprepossessing an equipment for service on a merchantman as could well be imagined, resembling in its unsuitability the "son-of-a-gentleman" incubus which Herman Melville never entirely shook off. That Dana was able to level the barriers which separated him from his fo'c'sle mates is a tribute to the powers of adaptability that are the result—or ought to be—of a liberal education. It is safe to say that a professional sailor could hardly have reversed the process with an equal degree of success.

The romantic aspects of life at sea were far from Dana's thoughts as he chronicled with careful accuracy what happened, and described what he saw down to the last knot on the topmost skysail. We learn from him how men lived in a ship's fo'c'sle, how and what they ate, where they slept, what they wore, the nature and manner of their duties, the extent of their pleasures. A careful picture, with no sop thrown to the fastidious.

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Dana has been likened to Defoe, whose direct simplicity and whose power of getting the effect he wanted by the most ordinary means, Dana also had. Dana was incapable of rhetorical extravagance or insincerity of any sort. Yet in his prosaic, matter-of-fact fashion Dana stumbled unwittingly through the back door of romance.

Bliss Perry believes that Dana's book belongs to the "literature of escape" as truly as Thoreau's *Walden* and Parkman's *Oregon Trail*. There is something to be said for that view, although the voyage was not undertaken with retreat from civilization in mind. The sea exercises an hypnotic influence that defies analysis and Dana fell a victim to its sorcery. He was well aware of the danger attending prolonged sojourn on the sea and when his return to Boston within the specified two years became questionable, he grew alarmed. He writes: "But one year more would settle the matter. I should be a sailor for life. . . ." The immediate difficulty was remedied, however, and Dana returned home to Harvard and a degree, to the practice of law, to political controversy, to the ramifications of an honourable career; but he returned too late, alas, to achieve peace of mind in conventional activities after his two years at sea. He wrote other books, but never again did his mind open to pour forth its riches upon the pages of an immortal work. Dana took refuge with his memories of "sails like sculptured marble", of rushing billows raised into foam under a freshening breeze. But the sails of his mind were furled forever.

But if *Two Years Before the Mast* belongs to the literature of escape by a sort of involution, *Moby Dick* belongs to it by Melville's own statement. He says:

> Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul; whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses; and especially whenever my hypos get such an upper hand of me, that it requires a strong moral principle to prevent me from deliberately stepping into the street, and methodically knocking people's hats off—then, I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can. This is my substitute for pistol and ball. With a philosophical flourish Cato throws himself upon his sword; I quietly take to the ship.

Like Cooper and Dana, Melville wrote of the sea from personal experience. Whaler, merchantman, and man-of-war, each made its contribution to his knowledge of life on the deep. At seventeen, in common with adventurous boyhood the world over, the idea of a trip to sea dazzled him. His father was dead, his mother too busy with her suddenly augmented responsibilities to spend time whittling down young Herman's squareness to fit into the round hole of her conventional existence; the world on land turned a cold shoulder to his adolescent problems, and the sea spelled adventure. Accordingly Melville shipped aboard the *Highlander* for Liverpool. Those thirty days as a greenhorn sailor on a dirty little ship, with fo'c'sle associates well down on the ladder toward bestiality and sordidness, were an outrageous introduction for the sensitive lad to life beyond the sheltered cleanliness of home. Two things happened to Melville on that voyage—his experiences were stamped indelibly upon his mind, and the sea claimed him for its own. Three years after the Liverpool voyage he shipped from New Bedford on an extended whaling cruise, in the course of which he arrived in the South Sea islands, where he deserted ship, driven to desperation by continued ill-treatment. His sojourn in the Marquesas Melville describes in *Typee* and *Omoo* (1846-1847).

In 1851, after much mental and spiritual travail, Melville brought forth *Moby Dick*,

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the stupendousness of which is just beginning to be appreciated. The reader's reaction to the book depends upon his purpose in reading it. He may read it as a story of the sea, which it is; as a treatise on whaling, which it is; as an epic of the human spirit, which it assuredly is. Or he may read it as a combination of all three.

As a story of life on the sea *Moby Dick* belongs with *The Pilot* and *Two Years Before the Mast*. Once more the reader is taken aboard a sailing ship to view life there through a sailor's eyes; once more he looks upon the sea "when all the waves rolled by like scrolls of silver; and by their soft, suffusing seethings made what seemed a silvery silence, not a solitude". Melville's descriptions are seldom uncoloured by reflection; his narrative is almost never free from philosophical interpretation of the march of events, and herein *Moby Dick* differs from Cooper's romances and Dana's factual narrative.

As a treatise on whaling *Moby Dick* is a monument to an industry whose glamour has vanished with the vanishing of the old square-rigged "spouters". Whales are still hunted, but the romance is gone.

The meaning of the fable of *Moby Dick the White Whale* has puzzled the wits and taxed the imaginative inventiveness of many who have tried to sound the bottom beneath the surface of Melville's sea. *Moby Dick* has been likened to *Beowulf* in its epic qualities. Mumford calls it "a portrait of the whale and a presentation of the demonic energies in the universe that harass and frustrate and extinguish the spirit of man". Van Wyck Brooks compares the White Whale with Grendel. "Was not Grendel", he asks, "also the symbol of 'all that most maddens and torments, all that stirs up the lees of things, all truth with malice in it, all that cracks the sinews and cakes the brain, all the subtle demonisms of life and thought, all evil visibly personified?' "

One is inclined to wonder at times just what Melville's *own* idea of the White Whale really was. Personally, I think the symbol of Moby Dick as the resistless maliciousness of blind force falls short of its mark. Somehow there is a pathetic element in the White Whale, a kind of helpless hugeness in spite of his specific powers of destruction. One is inclined to pity him as one pities that huge Satan of Milton engulfed in the fires of Hell, knowing full well that all that hugeness, all that cunning, all that active malignity is doomed to final extinction. Victory comes for a space—Adam is deceived and many an angel falls in the heavenly war; so too does victory come to Moby Dick—Ahab and all his crew save one are destroyed. But even as Ahab's body is slowly settling to the ocean's bottom, his spirit is arming for the conflict that ends in victory, in another body, in another age, perhaps, but the puny force of Moby Dick will bend reverently before it.

In his essay on *The Causes of Sterility in Literature* Walter Bagehot lays the paucity of great works to the fact that most writers are mere lazy pilferers of other men's ideas rather than open-eyed observers of the world's phenomena. That criticism does not apply to Melville, nor, indeed, to Cooper or Dana. Cooper saw, remembered, and wrote; Dana saw, remembered, meditated, and wrote; Melville saw, remembered, philosophized, and wrote. Three immortal mariners! In their books "the great flood-gates of the wonder-world swung open" and with them we too can sing:

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely
sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer
her by,
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and
the white sail's shaking,
And a gray mist on the sea's face and a gray
dawn breaking.

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KAY BOYLE: EXPERIMENTER

by Evelyn Harter

TEN YEARS ago Kay Boyle went to France, and she has not come back. Yet in circles where it is the custom to belittle or bewail our literary expatriates it is well to mention her name tentatively, for she has taken the gifts of France with both hands, has sorted them, and very possibly has given us back something new which we had not had otherwise. She is not tired of her native land, nor disgruntled with it, though she is sometimes angry; one finds in her work an affectionate and wistful regard for America, especially for its landscape and the vigour of its pioneers, and a certain regret that it has become necessary for their grandchildren to retrace their steps eastward in search of a congenial spiritual climate in which to work.

She reached France at the time when the hilarious anarchy of dadaism was passing, and the "automatic writing" of *surréalisme* was coming in. Paris, then as now, was the Joycean stronghold, and though she is frequently bracketed with it she has never fully come under its spell. In fact she has shown throughout her exile an ability to benefit by the bond-breaking exaggeration of various mercuric French literary movements without becoming imitative; intellectual varietism has never obscured her fundamental tenderness, humour and spirit, and her native sense of obligation in craftsmanship.

Her published work thus far (a book of short stories, two novels, and random poetry) confronts us in greater or less degree with something fairly new among women writers, a spirit of experimentation. In general, whatever women have contributed to literature up to 1932 has not been, as Virginia Woolf points out in *A Room of Her Own*, in the direction either of technical adventure or of an approach peculiarly and richly feminine.

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Kay Boyle and her husband, Laurence Vail.

Kay Boyle herself says: "In literature, I have never wholly liked the work of women, with the exception of Gertrude Stein. Tact and complacency have long been women's attributes, and I think they prove a drawback to good reading. They do not write simply or violently enough for my taste. I should like my prose to be lucid, direct and lean".

Women have, perhaps, felt their encroachment too keenly and have not planted their feet securely enough in gained ground to hazard it by reckless experiment. Their tendency, by temperament or by experience, has been, once a successful imitation has been struck or a happy vein found, to dig in. Yet if characteristics of women writers, as contrasted to men, could be set up at all they might be said to be these: a certain wilfulness in expression, as seen in Emily Dickinson and Katherine Mansfield, and a first concern with relations between men and women, as opposed to men's concern with an individual and his God, or an individual and his world (a difference fundamental in the work of Sigrid Undset and Thomas Mann).

By these rather tentative standards Kay Boyle appears definitely feminine. Her verse at first reading seems excessively wayward, even to those familiar with the linear association method of writing. Her short stories and her novels deal with the distress of human beings reaching for love and for each other, under the cloud of disease, or the foreknowledge of death. Her daring lies in an extravagance of metaphor, in roguishness, in ellipses. The short stories particularly revive for us the painful brilliance of living. Here is poison—in the small doses in which arsenic is prescribed for anaemia.

She has spoken of the impulse and drive behind her first work. "I would surely never have written had not my mother given to me an almost superhuman encouragement and interest and whatever background I have was her gift to me." This was the mother who ran on the Farmer-Labour ticket as candidate for the school-board in 1919, and who frequently embarrassed Kay to tears by insisting on reading aloud at meetings of the workers some of her daughter's earlier literary efforts, entitled *Arise, Ye Women*, and *The Working Girl's Prayer*. The daughter explains that she was equally eager to read aloud Gertrude Stein and explain Brancusi's sculpture to the workers.

Her life up to her eighteenth year in this country was fitful and changing. She was born at St. Paul, Minnesota, on February 19, 1903, but was taken from there at the age of six months. During her early years she travelled through Europe with her parents and sister, studying painting, writing, and music. The family then settled in Washington, but soon after their fortunes suffered reverses and the father had a garage in Cincinnati, Ohio. There Kay studied violin and architecture and worked as telephone operator in the garage. When she was eighteen she mar-

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ried a young Frenchman, Richard Brault, who was studying engineering at the University of Cincinnati; together they went to New York, and a year later to France. A daughter was born to her in Nice in 1927, and another in Paris in 1929. Early in 1932 she married Laurence Vail, whose *Murder, Murder!* was published in England last year.

Plagued by the Nightingale, her first novel, was begun in Le Havre while she was working and gardening there and the first half of it was printed by Ernest Walsh in *This Quarter* as early as 1926, though it did not appear in book form in America and England until 1931. It is a narration told in deep, measured breaths, and there is a fine surface luminosity in this story of an American girl who marries and is received into the tight little circle of a French family concerned only with retaining its worldly goods and passing on its tainted blood to the largest possible progeny. Kay Boyle is here shown as the mistress of two levels, the explicit and the implicit; the flowers that she gathers on the upper level distill, drop by drop, a bitter brew on the unseen level, and it is this potion that in the end accomplishes her tragic effect. Under a silken surface she shows the ignorance and grasping family affection which sends the lovely Charlotte to her grave, as she was later, under a similar sheen, to show the savage poisonous fight of Hannah and Eve over a tubercular poet in *Year Before Last.*

"Kay Boyle loves to climb."

Her short stories, published by the Black Sun Press in 1929, and in the United States with a few additions and omissions as *Wedding Day and Other Stories* in 1931 (contrary to the firm prediction of William Carlos Williams in *transition* 18), are fiercer stuff than the first novel. Her chief theme becomes apparent—youth faced with disease or death—its wide-eyed, unbelieving recoil. Sex is dominant here, though without the elementary aid of anatomical suggestion. Each story starts without a preface or a program and ends without a conclusion or a moral. She picks up a situation, already mature and far-advanced, and carries it a few steps farther. There is no description of the people, nor explanation of how they came to be there. They simply live before us for a few terrible moments. The method is galvanic, as Faulkner's is, with a difference. In Faulkner's work the electrified imagination is forced to leap from clue to clue as current jumps from anode to cathode. Kay Boyle's effect is more nearly that of an electrical storm; the atmosphere is murky; there are sharp daggers of light across the sky, but the

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sky continues purple and the parched earth receives no benediction of rain.

We pick up one of the shortest, *On the Run,* the substance of which is later used in *Year Before Last.* A young man far gone with tuberculosis is being hounded from hotel to hotel trying to find a place to die. His young wife's services are important—she must sing and dance about the room when he has coughing fits and she must order for him large meals of pigs' feet grilled in batter and bread-crumbs as a testimony of his good health. Side by side with an occasional archaic way of saying a thing ("This was a quiet enough thought to him") will appear an angry antagonism to language; like an exasperated bulldog, Kay Boyle shakes words between her teeth until they rattle. There is also a huge delight in audacious physiological details.

To enjoy her poems one must accept the theory of poetry which rules out utilitarian language, the familiar sequence of cues to the intelligence by which common ideas are refurbished and represented; which instead seeks by a "flaming collusion of rare words" to induct one without the aid of reason into a realm of pure poetic pleasure. Her poetry seems, at first perusal, excessively wayward; it has a buoyant, irresponsible power of suggestion that leaps from El Greco's View of Toledo with "its infernal clouds and the green of its pastures, That would bring a plague on whatever cattle or stock grazed on them" to Washington, D. C., "the streets of that city laid out for the eye of a bird", to Poe, "with his arms crossed boldly to conceal his shabby ruffle". It is a method variable, unreasonable, petulant, full of prankish details. Through many of the poems is shot a strain of fertile grief; to one remembering the laughing tricks of the dead one, the delights of living seem enhanced:

I remember them
With Christmas trees
With lollypops
Eating their soup quietly
Out of the sides of their spoons.

The weakness of the *genre* is that it is easier to run shallow than to run deep. If a phrase is not divinely right, it is nothing more than a silly waste; there can be no half-way. Surely "the rich false chocolate drops of despair in a horse's head" is wrong, but one cannot question the rightness of

With her youngest daughter, Apple.

the buckhounds went on under the rain
with the wet fern swinging lace over their eyes
and their skins hanging like crumpled velvet.

Kay Boyle likes to climb and to ride horseback, and, possibly as a result of this, or possibly because of an influence from a vogue for sport in literature which was at its height in France from 1922 to 1926 with such proponents as Jean Prévost and Jean-Richard Bloch, her work is spotted with references to athletics:

. . . he was going back and forth on the balls of his feet making his calves bulge out in his white skin, with his blue socks hanging down

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over his track shoes, and his trunks fitting in well over his thighs. I could see him drawing his shoulders in so that they would not be so magnificent and his hands were stuck away in his pockets, and I thought he was beautiful with a clean, unsubtle beauty that was as dull as a Grecian man's body.

She has a particular taste for pictures of horses, notable in the story called *Episode in the Life of an Ancestor,* and again in *Plagued by the Nightingale*:

. . . But the filly flung her head high and leaped back on her heels. With a lovely tremor she shook Luc off as though he were a blue-bottle fly, but his hand on her mane had never wavered and her reins were securely threaded through his fingers. She leaped backwards with the most agile grace, in great long springs, with her hind legs lowered, and her haunches quivering with delight. This was all a part of the game she played with him, so obviously playing at being stricken with terror and in such apprehension as to what he might do.

In addition to this expressed preference for sports Kay Boyle "likes to be cool, to travel to strange places, meet odd people, play chess". As to reading matter, she says she prefers to read "poetry, accounts of flying, arctic exploration, or undersea exploration, to anything else".

What may we expect of Kay Boyle? Hitherto nearly all of her work has had an autobiographical first impulse, easily changed to extraneous terms and considerably transmuted in the process. She has shown herself capable of writing tender, unsanctimonious, high-spirited prose, with a considerable amount of internal bleeding. The new novel, *Year Before Last,* is a disturbing book, arbitrary, kinetic, and full of diamond-like prose. The reader may not experience the same impelling alliance with the main characters which he feels in *Plagued by the Nightingale.* The author has a deep distrust of the false clarities which destroy overtones and mystery, since actions are the solid but not too significant residues of what goes on in heads and hearts. It is her rich gift to know that residues and surfaces are almost always false and sterile; it is the elements and the interiors that are honest and fecund.

She is obviously trying to find a technique and a subject-matter quite personal, and has already succeeded in making for herself an original and hypnotic style which carries the reader from page to page in breathless, agonized excitement. It is part of her craftsmanship that she does not point an accusing finger at her characters. She simply lets them betray their nobility (who will be able to forget the heart-breaking high spirits of Martin, the poet?) or their cheapness. One remembers the ugly priest with the broken arm, Eve Raeburn of the scorching jealousy, and the bombastic Duke, in *Year Before Last.*

She herself says that the short-story and novel form are "adequate finger exercises" and that she is working towards a broad and pure poetic form. It is significant that in American poetry her admiration is all for Poe, Whitman, and William Carlos Williams. She wills to try the dangerous and untried and she will probably constantly imperil herself in extending outward the horizons of perceptions and sympathies. One of the risks of her kind of writing is that it may go so far and deep that it cannot be followed and will have significance chiefly for herself. It behooves us to wish her well in her exploring, and hope that she will not get lost.

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AMBROSE BIERCE AND HIS FIRST LOVE

AN IDYLL OF THE CIVIL WAR

by Carey McWilliams

THE COMPLETE bibliography, one is assured, exists only in the imagination of the novice. Some slight experience as a biographer has convinced me that biographical finality is still more of an illusion. One searches contemporary newspaper files, consults exhaustive lists of authorities, interviews innumerable relatives and "close personal friends", and, with an elation soon proved deceptive, concludes that the last contradiction has been solved and the final uncertainty removed. Born of this confident mood, a biography is presented to the world. Innocent critics and reviewers pronounce it "definitive", and the biographer gloats with satisfaction. But like proverbial bad pennies slight discrepancies are revealed, new facts are discovered, and fresh anecdotes are recalled. Soon the magnificent structure so patiently erected has been riddled with loopholes. The biography is soon proved to be merely a preliminary essay and the biographer tastes the lees of incompleteness and fragmentariness. And so, I suppose, it has always been.

While working on *Ambrose Bierce: A Biography*, I caught an echo of a boyhood love-affair that defied verification. It was not reported to me exactly as a love-affair; in fact, my informant knew nothing of the matter at first hand. She could contribute merely a name and a phrase. The name was "Fatima" which, with the phrase, I managed to dovetail into my narrative. At the time, I had no definite reason to believe that Fatima ever existed. Although the search for Fatima proved to be unavailing, I did not forget the incident nor the name.

Two years passed and then by a happy circumstance I discovered Fatima. For the benefit of my successor who will of course write the "definitive" life of Ambrose Bierce, I bequeath this record. In view of the fact that the hero of this idyllic affair was "Bitter" Bierce, the bad man of American letters, the incident has an importance which it would otherwise lack. Admirers of Bierce will doubtless deplore this account of the affair, particularly the quotation of the poems that celebrated its rise and fall. But the sentimentality of the idyll is not distasteful, nor, for that matter, merely amusing. It would be rather disappointing to discover in a yellowing envelope bearing the postmark "1864" a love-letter in the modern manner. The sentiment, like the quaint proportions of an ancient print, attests its historic veracity. It belongs to the place and period—Warsaw, Indiana, in 1861—and the characters are Fatima Wright and Ambrose Bierce, whose portraits accompany this piece. For the incident as recorded, I am deeply indebted to Mrs. E. W. Langdon and Mrs. Bird Funk Nicolaus, and, lastly, to Fatima who is known to her neighbours nowadays as Mrs. W. J. Fleming.

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Some years prior to the outbreak of the Civil War, Marcus Aurelius Bierce, veteran of the War of the Revolution, lived with his family of nine children on a farm near Warsaw, Indiana. All of these children had been given fantastic names commencing with the letter "A". Ambrose Gwinett, however, was known to his schoolmates as "Brady". He walked from his father's farm to the high school in Warsaw, wearing rather uncouth "heavy half shoes" and "blue woollen home-knit socks". During the winter months, the school maintained a stove at one end of the room behind which was a long bench constructed for the benefit of those who had travelled from a distance. One of Bierce's classmates was Fatima Wright, known to her friends variously as 'Time, Tima, and Fatima. Her father was the proprietor of Wright's House, a local hostelry. Fatima does not remember much about her classmate. She does recall sitting by his side on the improvised warming bench during the winter season. Bierce was not regarded as a bright student, nor did he associate with those who had that reputation. Some of the students wrote compositions and verses, but Bierce did not. None of his classmates knew that he was interested in writing, if indeed he was at that time, although Fatima does recall an epitaph that he wrote for a child:

> She tasted of life's bitter cup—
> Refused to drink her portion up
> But turned her little head aside
> Disgusted with the taste and died.

After graduation from high school, Brady Bierce worked at odd jobs in Warsaw until the outbreak of the Civil War. Although under age, he enlisted in the first company of volunteers. In the midst of the excitement occasioned by the departure of Company C, Ninth Indiana Infantry for the war, a messenger delivered a mysterious envelope to

AMBROSE BIERCE
Just after enlisting in the Civil War

Fatima. It contained, much to her astonishment, a poem from an anonymous admirer. She still has the poem. It is, so far as I know, the earliest poetic composition of the foremost satirist America has produced, and I quote it in full:

Fatima, should an angel come for heaven,
Bright with celestial ardor from above,
And say no sin of mine should be forgiven,
Till I should cease to sigh for thy dear love,—
Though I'd acknowledge just was the decree,
(For how can I love God adoring thee),
I'd proudly point him back to heaven, and say
"Give me her love,—wash not my sins away,—
But double them upon my head, and bid me go
When life is ended to the realms below."
Thy love, dear girl, is worth eternal woe.
And wouldst thou know whose heart thus yearns
for thee
And if thou knew couldst deign to pardon me
Two moments sweet I've been in paradise
Thy lips have twice met mine and only twice.

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The identification was, unfortunately, ambiguous: Fatima could not recall who it was that she had kissed but twice.

Oliver Wright, a brother, had also enlisted in the Ninth Indiana. From time to time, he wrote to his family about the activities of the company in West Virginia. In one letter he mentioned that Brady Bierce had been made a lieutenant for conspicuous bravery in rescuing a comrade while under heavy fire

FATIMA WRIGHT
Taken at Warsaw, Indiana, about 1864

from the enemy. If Brady ever returned to Warsaw, Fatima and Clara, another sister, must entertain him royally. Later during the war, Bierce received a severe scalp wound and returned to Warsaw on furlough. Oliver Wright's admonition to his sisters was doubtless superfluous: Bierce was young, wounded, and a hero. He no longer concealed his admiration for Fatima. When she told him of the mysterious poem, he said: "If you knew the man that wrote the poem would you love him?" To quote Fatima: "I said certainly I would love him; how could I help but love any one who loved me so much?" Needless to say, the authorship of the poem was confessed.

During this pleasant furlough, Bierce and his fiancée (for they became engaged) were together constantly, chaperoned with all the formality of the period by Clara Wright. The young lieutenant was very dignified. He was so dignified, in fact, that it was a great pleasure to tease him. On one occasion he drove to the Wrights' home in a rig drawn by a handsome team to take the sisters riding. Fatima had "a very fine hat with a long tissue veil tied over it". She took the veil and tied it over her father's huge wide-brimmed straw hat and minced down the walk to the carriage accompanied by her chaperon. Bierce was furious. He jerked the fancy veil from the ugly straw chapeau and ordered the ladies back to the house. When they again emerged, an elegant bonnet had been substituted for the offending straw hat and they drove away "in a peaceful and jolly manner".

The scalp wound was troublesome, however, and Bierce must have damned the hours that he had to remain in his father's home. By that time his father had moved into Warsaw. A little girl from the neighbouring Piper family ran away nearly every day to steal into the library of the Bierce home and idolize the young hero who reclined on his father's couch covered with a handsome military cape. He teased the young girl so unmercifully that she was glad to escape. The wound occasioned apologies and broken engagements. Clara Wright has fortunately saved a note, sent on one such occasion, that is particularly valuable for the date which it bears:

Warsaw, Jan. 27—'64.

Miss Clara—

I am sorry to state that I fear I shall be compelled to forego the pleasure I anticipated in

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accompanying you and Tima to the concert this evening.

Upon rising this morning I was attacked with giddiness followed by a severe headache which has increased ever since, until I am really very ill.

I write that you may make other engagements in time for the concert; though if my illness subsides I shall be most happy to attend if you are still unengaged.

I am very sorry and assure you that nothing short of positive sickness would prevent my claiming the honor you so kindly intended me.

Sincerely your friend,
A. G. Bierce.

Please give my kindest regards to Tima.
A. G. B.

Nearly every afternoon, the sisters, accompanied by Bierce, walked to an empty cabin on the edge of the woods that came to the outskirts of Warsaw. They took books with them and Bierce read aloud, while the devoted Fatima wove a garland of wild rose buds. (Shades of *The Devil's Dictionary* and *The Fiend's Delight*!) Most of the correspondence which passed between Bierce and his fiancée, including numerous lyrics, has been destroyed. After the romantic couple had quarreled, Fatima destroyed all of the letters that she had received. But she did save, in addition to the poem that I have quoted, an acrostic that Bierce left with her when he rejoined his command:

Fate—whose edict oft hath wrung
Anguish—drops from hearts unstrung—
Tears of hopeless prayerless pain—
I now defy thee. Free again,
My soul though darkened still by thee,
And 'bittered still, spurns thy decree.

While *she* loves me, sheathe thy dart;
Rob me of that love—and bury
In this burning passion-heart—
Gloomy cell of misery—
Heated toy of woman's art—
Thy fearful shaft—Insanity.

And the author of these lines was the man who, in his column of "Prattle" in the San Francisco *Examiner,* terrorized a generation of "minor" poets on the Pacific Coast!

The days seemed interminable when Bierce returned to the army. He seems to have been tormented (the usual fate of the soldier) by thoughts of his sweetheart being wooed by civilians and soldiers home on furlough. Not receiving letters as frequently as he desired and being somewhat exasperated by the restrictions that kept him from Warsaw, Bierce resorted to the traditional expedient; *i. e.* he wrote to the chaperon. The letter, which is now in Mrs. Fleming's possession, is the only letter in existence written by Bierce while in the service. For this reason, I quote it in full:

Hd. Qrs. 2nd Brig. 3d Div. 4th A. C.
Ackworth, Ga., June 8th, 1864.

My Dear Clara:

Will you be very much displeased to hear from me by letter?

If I thought so I would never touch pen again. 'Tis true you never asked me to write to you, but the knowledge that I still live cannot be unwelcome to one who professes to regard me as a *friend.* I don't know Clare what the word *friend* means to you who have so many, but to *me* friendship has a meaning deeper than the definition of Webster or Worcester. And my friendship for you is a feeling which no language can define. Do you call this flattery? If so you do not know me and I forgive you.

I have not written to you before, but my neglect was not caused by indifference. I knew Tima would sometimes mention my name to you. But I want to hear from you very much; not because you will tell me of Tima, but of yourself. You always seemed to think, Clare, that I never cared for you except as Tima's sister —a sort of necessary evil. (*Vide*—our carriage ride by Eagle lake.) Is it necessary for me to say you were unjust to me? No, Clare, except our sweet Tima, I love you better than any one on this earth.

Perhaps this is not right;—perhaps my mother and sister should be first in my affections,—but so it is.

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I am getting very tired of my present life and weary of the profession of arms. Not because of its horrors or dangers; not because its hardships affect me, but because I wish to be with you and my darling. The pleasant weeks with you, so like a dream, have nearly spoiled the soldier to make the—pensive individual.

Ask Tima why I get no more letters from her. Have I offended her? I may have written something as heartless and cruel as I used to say to her. If I have I hope she will forgive me. Her last letter was dated May 11th.

Do you think that there is a probability of my letters getting into other hands than hers? Please tell me for the thought troubles me very much. Oh, if I could be with you both again my measure of happiness would be full. I do not see how I could have been so unhappy as I sometimes was when with you.

But I ought rather to be thankful for being allowed so much happiness with you—so much more than I deserved—than to repine at the fate which withholds more. I hardly expect ever to see you again, and perhaps it is better so. Every day some one is struck down who is so much better than I. Since leaving Cleveland Tenn. my brigade has lost nearly one third its numbers killed and wounded.

Among these were so many good men who could ill be spared from the army and the world. And yet *I* am left. But my turn will come in time. Oh, how pleasant would death be were it for you and Tima, instead of for my country—for a cause which may be right and may be wrong. Do you think I lack patriotism for talking this way? Perhaps so. Soldiers are not troubled with that sort of stuff.

May I talk to you about D——? Do you love him yet? or think you do?

Is that a blunt question? You know you told me you did once. Please answer it.

Oh, I wish I could help you. You who have been so good to me. But my hands are tied. I can only warn you. There is a metal among the rocks here which viewed at a distance has all the appearances of gold. A close inspection shows it to be the basest dross. You are an admirer of pebbles I believe.

Do tell me all about yourself and Tima. What books you read, what society you have, and if you have lots of fun. Capt. Webster desired to be remembered to you and Tima if I ever wrote you. By the way is Jo Williams at W.? The less you have to do with him the better you will please me. If you require reasons I will give them. Do you know my mother yet, and does Tima call on her as she promised me? How is Lyde C.?

Now Clare if you don't write to me at once I shall take it as proof that you don't wish to hear from me again.

Give my kindest regards to 'Slissa and the girls.

Take my darling in your arms, and kiss her a thousand times for me.

With more love than I can tell, I am

Your friend

A. G. Bierce

P.S. Do you hear from Ol? I can get no word from him.*

B——

It is raining very hard and I am very lonely. In looking over my valise just now I found tucked away snugly a little embroidered handkerchief. Do you remember it? Then there were also some little pebbles; common looking things enough, but each one is transparent, and looking into it I see two tiny figures with skirts just *slightly* elevated, showing such delicate little—feet, stepping along the soft sand, and picking up these little nothings for me. What delicate little tracks they leave behind them. But these tracks will all be erased by the next rain. Not so the impressions left on the hard and stony soil of my heart. Every examination shows me how some mischievous persons have crept into the garden of my soul, and tracked it up worse than a melon patch by school-boys.

But not one of the little tracks shall be blotted out by the rude gardener [sic] Time. The amount of it all is, Clare, that I love you and Tima so I can't find language to tell it.

I just wish I could pass my whole life with you both, and have nothing to do but give myself up to the delicious intoxication of your society. For that, I would renounce the whole world and all the ties of kindred; throw away every ambition or aim in life, and make a fool of myself in the most approved style generally.

Brady.

* Oliver Wright.

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The letter was written with obvious care; it contains no interlineations or corrections. The handwriting is unmistakable: time did not change it by so much as a stroke or an added shading. While excessively romantic (one must remember that the soldier was young, that he was miles from home, and that the hour was late), the tone of the letter is characteristic. The explicit and forthright direction ("If you require reasons I will give them"), and the redeeming lightness of the last lines, are qualities that distinguish nearly every Bierce letter that I have examined. At the time the letter was written, Bierce had been in the army over three years—since April 19th, 1861. He had fought at Shiloh, Chickamauga, and Franklin. Slight wonder that he was "getting very tired of the profession of arms" for a "cause which might be right or might be wrong". His meditations fifty-four years later merely echoed this same dubiety.

As is well known, Bierce went to the Pacific Coast at the end of the war. Contrary to the previously accepted facts, however, it now seems that he returned from California to New York on his way back to Warsaw. In New York he received word that Fatima had married. He would not credit the report until it had been confirmed by his brother, Albert Bierce. He then returned to California, where he remained until leaving for London. In later years, Albert Bierce called upon Fatima and delivered to her a sheaf of letters and a clipping from *Figaro*, an early San Francisco weekly. On the margin of the clipping the faded pencil notation "Brady" appears:

NOT QUITE FORGOTTEN

Not quite forgotten, though the years endeavor
To fling a veil between thy soul and mine;
Deep in my heart thy memory livest ever;
By tears and smiles unalter'd is thy shrine.

Not quite forgotten, oh! thou first and fairest
Of all my day-dreams! thou who yet must be
Trusted in longing and still loved the dearest.
Forgotten? There is no such word for thee!

Not quite forgotten, for thy dear reflection
Undimm'd in memory ever must remain;
And there are times when all the old affection
Which I have borne thee surges back again.

No, not forgotten! for a chance resemblance
A voice which rings as thine hath rung of old,
Will often bring thee back to my remembrance,
And reproduce the past a thousand fold.

Faint as the fragrance of a flower long gather'd,
Such is the love I bear thee; and no sin
I count it, for its passion long since wither'd;
And now 'tis love naught of earth therein.

Can it have been a terrifying recollection of this lyric that made Bierce such a relentless foe of the biographer? In his savage attack on the local poets of San Francisco, could he have been moved by some ghostly refrain from his own lyrics to Fatima? The few lines that I have quoted would have brought a princely sum if auctioned to his enemies in San Francisco during the decades in which they writhed under his satire. I think it quite likely that his hatred of romantic and sentimental poets may be traced to the revulsion which he must have experienced in later years toward this idyllic affair and the poems and letters in which it was commemorated.

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THE YOUNG WRITERS OF GERMANY

by P. Beaumont Wadsworth

GERMAN literature ten years ago—with Germany sliding gracelessly down into the famous inflation period—fell into two distinctly defined groups: on the one hand Hauptmann, Schnitzler, the brothers Thomas and Heinrich Mann, Wassermann, pre-War to their genteel finger tips; and on the other the whole War generation, united almost to a man around the rowdy banner of Expressionism.

The literary stars of Expressionism—whose god was the recently deceased Frank Wedekind—were Kaiser, Sternheim, von Unruh, Hasenclever, Werfel, and Ernst Toller, who had made a spectacular Nijinsky leap into the literary limelight with several startling plays. Now Expressionism is dead, killed by the stabilization of the mark, and 1932 reveals a transformed literary landscape in Germany, for nowhere in western Europe is creative literature so closely bound up with its social and political background.

Defeat, betrayal, disillusion, despair have been the leading motifs in German political life during the past decade. The Revolution of 1918 is now seen as a transference of power into the bureaucratic hands of the Social-Democrats, who gleefully welcomed American capital to prop up a system which they did not, despite their socialistic phrases, wish to see abolished. The consequences of Versailles, reparations, and inflation drove both the middle classes and the masses into a deeper despair, so that the Stalin bass of Moscow and the Hitler tenor of Münich drew thousands into the Communist and Nationalistic camps. All these notes are reflected in varying degrees in the work of the young writers, most of whom are naturally recruited from the middle class. With these few facts in mind one can examine the literary output of the young with some understanding of their problems and aims.

It is necessary to note here that "young" German writers fall naturally into three age groups: those who fought in the War; those who lived through their adolescence in the post-War years, and the literary Benjamins for whom the War is really a remote legend. This age division is important in contemporary Germany, because it determines a writer's spirit, his attitude towards social problems—his *Weltanschauung*—and his literary style and choice of subject matter.

Since the demise of Expressionism some time in the early twenties there has been only one influential literary movement to take its place: the "New Objectivity". What do the practitioners of this new school stand for? First and foremost, they worship the Fact. Where the hysterical Expressionists, ignoring concrete actuality, whirled dervish-like in a world of jumbled symbolism and muddled philosophy, the New Objectivists surrender themselves to the scientific joy of hunting down the significant Fact. They aim at a short, concise, vivid, unsensational recital of superficial details. Shunning intuition and emotion, they skim the crowded surface of modern life, incessantly searching the chaos

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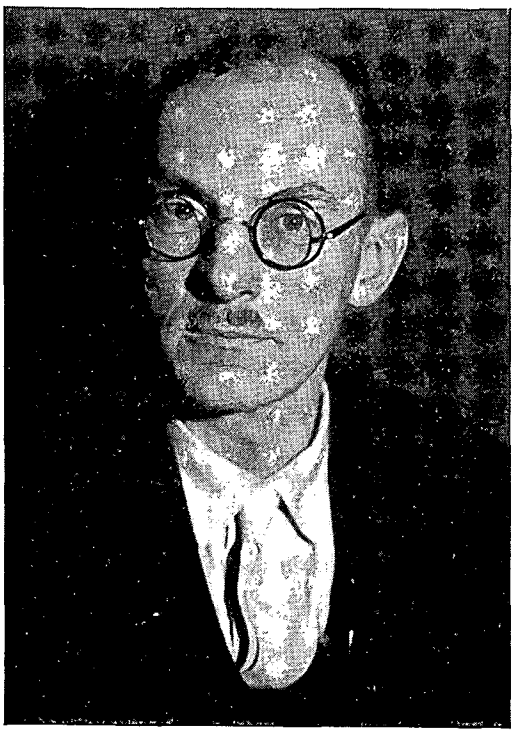
MANFRED HAUSMANN. BORN 1892

A "Young Romantic". Of his many works only "A Salute to Heaven" has been translated.



LUDWIG RENN. BORN 1889

A member of the "New Objectivist" group. Two of his novels, "War" and "After War" have been published in English.

OSCAR MARIA GRAF. BORN 1894

A Bavarian who writes principally of peasants and workers. He is now engaged on an historical novel of the Peasant War in Germany.

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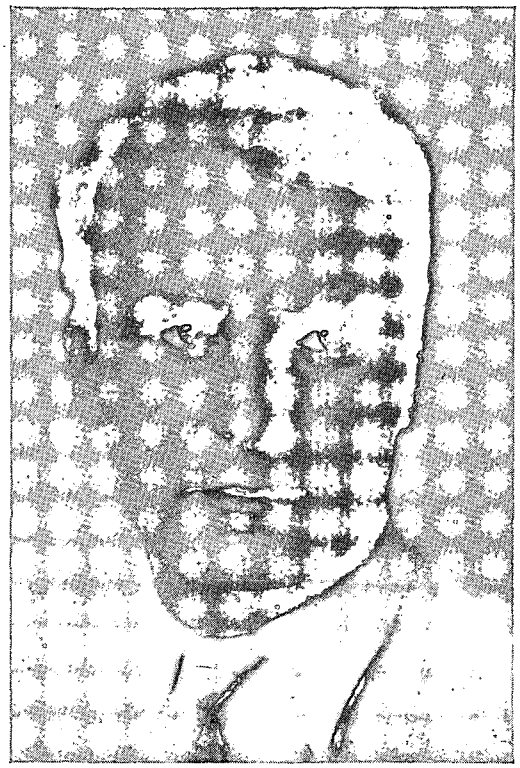

HEINRICH HAUSER. BORN 1901

Another "Young Romantic", author of novels and books of travel and reporting. He recently visited this country and put his experiences into both a book and a motion picture.

for significant detail. They produce slender books full of accurately observed details excellently rendered, and they strip human character down to its most primitive and behaviouristic elements, just as the German nudists have undressed so earnestly for health purposes.

The somewhat dry and unlyrical prose of the New Objectivists—obviously a terrific revolt against German sentimentality and verbosity—is really a kind of *reportage* of life, in which the author merely makes ironic comments. These writers wish to describe a tragedy in a sentence, a whole love in a paragraph. They understate, un-dramatize, and sometimes achieve a remarkable effect of reality by this sort of super-simplicity.

Joseph Roth, Hermann Kesten, Ernst Glaeser, Erich Maria Remarque, Ludwig Renn, Anna Seghers, and F. C. Weiskopf are some of the leading exponents of the New Objectivist school of writing. Although divided in their social outlook they all have technical elements in common.

Roth and Kesten, comrades-in-letters, both belong to the disinherited Berlin Jewish group. Allied in spirit neither to the middle class nor to the workers, they occupy a curiously "superfluous" position. Roth is European and individualistic, but neither Europe nor society favours his pre-War philosophy. Observing life with a fine Jewish sensitivity, he seems lost amid conditions alien to a soul seeking shelter. Kesten has a less delicate air. His four novels are anything but pleasant. *Joseph Breaks Free*, which alone has appeared in English translation, contains enough unsavoury material to fill several books, and the foul odor of Berlin's East Side fills Kesten's pages.

Glaeser and Remarque belong to the shattered German middle class. Both of these young men have produced important literary documents. They have described the history of thousands of their fellow-countrymen, each writer having produced two autobiographical novels. But whereas Remarque pursues the "above the battle" attitude of a Galsworthy, there is evidence from Glaeser's latest literary work that he is now veering towards Moscow with F. C. Weiskopf, a writer who has moved from poetry into the sphere of sociological literature.

Weiskopf, Ludwig Renn, and Anna Seghers are now recognized as Left Wing Writers. Renn, with his two autobiographical novels *War* and *After War* behind him, is now working on a complete autobiography in

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which his path towards Communism will be revealed. Whether he will become an important writer or not, or whether he will prefer action to the pen, only the future will tell.

Weiskopf has recently produced an important historical novel dealing with the last days of the Hapsburg Monarchy in Bohemia: *The Slav Song*. He has progressed beyond the autobiographical stage and devotes most of his time to sociological fiction or travel books.

Four years ago Anna Seghers won an important literary prize for her brilliant short novel, *The Revolt of the Fishermen,* in which she describes a fishermen's strike and its inevitable defeat. This writer's output is small, but her interest in social themes and her style mark her as one of the most promising young German writers.

Three young Romantics are representative of another stream of German writing: Manfred Hausmann, Heinrich Hauser, and Kurt Heuser. Hausmann possesses a fresh lyrical talent and a fragile charm. Living remote from the ugly side of life—he has built himself a country retreat near Bremen—he writes of nature and of small, simple things. A poet at heart, he is still entranced by the wonder of life and intoxicated by the gentle tremor of his own feelings, so that his travel book *A Little Love for America*, the record of a flying trip to the States, is really a tour through Herr Manfred's emotional temperament. So far he has not produced a work of major importance.

Hauser is romantic in temperament, yet he is drawn to both romantic and ugly things, with the result that his work is a curious mixture of imaginative literature and travel *reportage*. His novel *Bitter Waters* is a fine piece of work which tells the simple story of how a German sailor picked up a little prostitute in Tampico and took her back with him to Germany, where the strangely assorted pair set to work to start a new life—a venture that ended in defeat.

Heuser, the youngest of the trio, is artistically the most exciting. His first novel *The Journey Inward* is Conradian in flavour. With a colourful background, Portuguese East Africa, Heuser has brought off a finely-wrought book. The artistic fusion of actuality and inner reality is accomplished with such an amazingly adult sureness of touch that Heuser is easily singled out as one of the

PETER MARTIN LAMPEL

Author of the much-discussed plays "Revolt in Erziehungshaus" ("Revolt in the Reformatory") and "Giftgas über Berlin" ("Poison gas over Berlin"). Both in plays and sociological studies he expresses a radical point of view.

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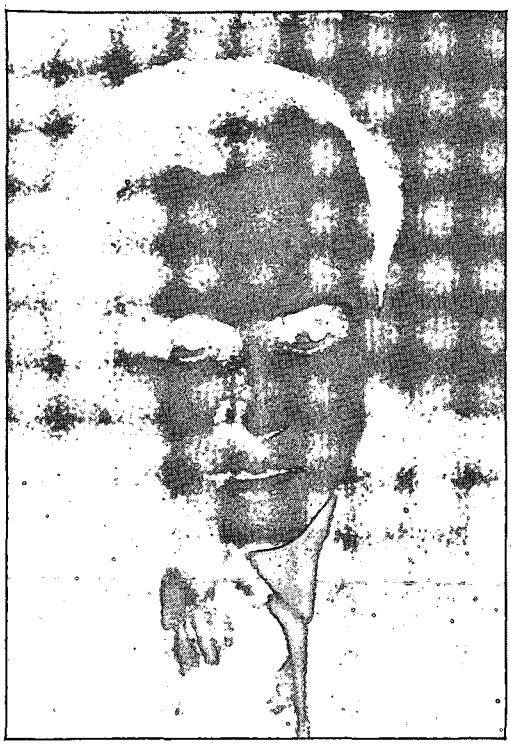
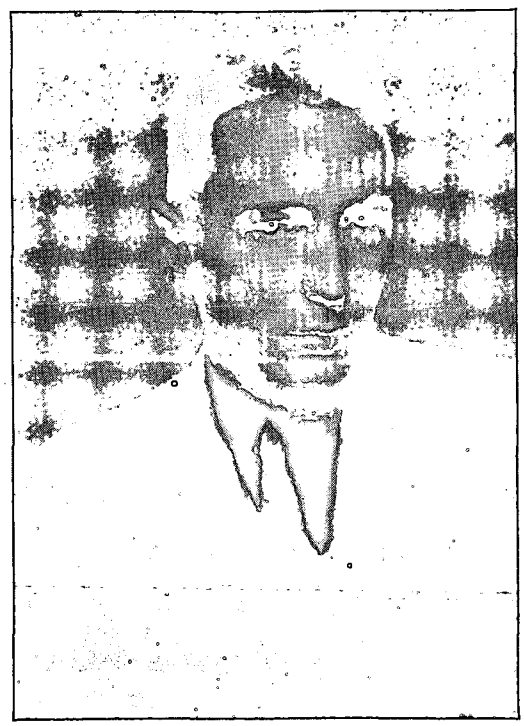


W. E. SÜSKIND. BORN 1901

Of the "Young Sophisticate" group. His novel "The Web of Youth" has been translated.



LERNET-HOLENIA. BORN 1897

A prolific and versatile writer who has remained independent of groups. His main work has been in the drama; he has written dramas, light comedies, and historical plays.

PETER MENDELSSOHN. BORN 1908

Another "Young Sophisticate". He has published one novel and engaged in journalism in Germany and England. He now lives in Paris.

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most significant of the young writers. With a personal view of the world and a splendid writing equipment he should travel far along the now little-trodden road of imaginative literature.

Five writers head another group, which we may call the Young Sophisticates: Otto Zarek, W. E. Süskind, Erich Ebermayer, Klaus Mann, and Peter Mendelssohn. This literary quintet stands for post-War sophistication, cynicism, sex freedom. Their eyes have been turned on the world of Aldous Huxley, Lawrence, Gide, Cocteau, Proust.

Zarek, whose novel *Greed* is a fascinating and faithful document of post-War Berlin youth, ushers the reader behind the stylized façade of the literary world where the young hobnob with the Kurfürstendamm *parvenus*. Ebermayer, hard-working and prolific, has produced some really charming studies of youth, his best novel being *The Battle for Odilienberg*, a story of the conflict between the idealistic old and the realistic young. Ebermayer is one of the younger Germans who believes that false ideals led to the War, and that the function of his own generation —which escaped active participation—is to work out a new program. Somewhat vague in aim and confused in thinking, Ebermayer emerges as the most vivid member of the Young Sophisticates: a German Glenway Wescott.

Süskind, too, belongs to the same spiritual coterie. He has written of his own boyhood and youth, and now he must pass to work of a wider scope. Artistic and subjective, he is extremely talented and sensitive to the problems of the individual. He writes delicately, and the elusive spirit of German youth hovers over all his work.

Klaus Mann, who has to fight the overshadowing reputations of his famous father and his famous uncle, is still very young and very prolific. Plays, stories, essays, articles, novels, and travel books pour from the pen of this young author who nevertheless has time to race all over Europe, now Berlin, then Münich, then Paris, then the Riviera, then the Baltic. Precocious and successful, he is the leader of the very young writing set. Although he has turned out so many books, chiefly about childhood, youth, love, and adolescence, he has not yet brought forth a work of permanent value.

Mendelssohn, only twenty-four, is the latest recruit to the ranks of the Young Sophisticates. His first novel *Farewell to Berlin* is an excellent disillusioned study of life in Berlin's Bohemian literary world. Largely autobiographical, this fresh and lively novel tells the story of a young man who is thrown at the tender age of seventeen into that corrupt literary *milieu*. Mendelssohn, a born writer, will undoubtedly produce important work in the future.

Bruno Brehm, Ernst Penzoldt and Paul Alverdes, although no longer very young, must still be classed with young German writers because of their necessarily late literary development. All three belong to the War generation. While they do not belong to any group, the fact that they all live in Münich, the old center of German literary life, gives a certain clue to their work. They stand outside the literary turmoil. All three have come to maturity very slowly. All three have the same quiet lyrical quality, the same poetic vein, the same interest in the individual human soul and faith in eternal values; and in a land where all values are undergoing a bitter transformation their beautiful voices sound like thin flutes hardly heard above the din of drums and bugle calls to action.

Brehm's historical novel *They Call it Patriotism* reveals this author, whose previous

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work was slight in character, as a highly gifted writer who can when he wishes attack solid themes.

Penzoldt is romantic in spirit, out of tune with the present, and his poetic fancy ranges from Elizabethan England to sixteenth-century Spain. He has produced a fictional-biography of the English poet Chatterton. His most personal book is *The Dwarf*, a

HERMANN KESTEN. BORN 1900

A "New Objectivist", writing realistic of the seamy side of Berlin.

novel in which he describes with heart-breaking poignancy the return of a completely crippled soldier to civilian life, a symbol of his own generation and the crippled soul of Germany. Idyllic is the proper adjective for Penzoldt's work: he has a delicately poised mind, and his imagination is steeped in the tender and beautiful moods evoked by the German landscape.

Paul Alverdes, author of but five slender volumes, has produced one minor masterpiece, obviously written under the influence of that German prose master, Hans Carossa. *The Whistlers' Room*, a short *novelle*, tells of several soldiers in a hospital who have been shot through the throat while in the trenches, so that they are compelled to use silver pipes in order to breathe properly. It is a delicate work written with marvellous artistry, and it makes one eager for more work from Alverdes.

Four writers stand out in the Social Cry movement: Georg Fink, Bruno Traven, Günther Birkenfeld, and Peter Martin Lampel. This quartet is concerned with the problems of the poor but each deals with them in a different way. Where Fink writes of his own childhood in the East Side of Berlin, Birkenfeld, middle class by origin, describes a similar slice of "poor life" from the outside.

Traven is the most exciting and most mysterious figure to appear in German literature during the past five years. Living in Mexico —no one knows exactly where—he has produced a long series of social novels which have quickly captured that reading public which devours Jack London and Upton Sinclair, two authors who seem to have been the main inspiration of this new young writer. With an easy-flowing epic style he describes dark social struggles against a Mexican background. His books are filled with peasants and workers on the one side and wicked capitalists on the other. His fame is terrific in Germany, for the exotic setting of his books has a romantic glamour.

Lampel sprang into immediate fame in 1928 with his play *Revolt in the Reformatory*, which swept Germany like wildfire the following year. Because of its daring theme—the ill treatment and inhuman attitude to-

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wards boys in social institutions—this play caused tremendous controversy. Since then Lampel has continued to choose exceptionally daring themes and has been repeatedly in the limelight. *Poison Gas over Berlin* was banned after a furious quarrel over its political and international implications. Lampel is a literary pamphleteer *par excellence*.

Among those significant writers who cannot be placed correctly in groups we have Oskar Maria Graf, Alexander Lernet-Holenia, Karl Benno von Mechow, and Edwin Erich Dwinger. Graf is the Bavarian Gorki, stemming from the peasant class. He is a born story-teller, lives in Münich, and writes only of the people around him; his books are filled with lusty country men and lusty women, the healthy odour of beer, and the untranslatable warmth of the Bavarian dialect. There is a complete absence of propaganda from his work. Graf is in the great German tradition of peasant writers. This is a branch of literature steadily being deserted by the young, and Graf brings fresh blood and strong vitality into the living stream again. He loves humanity, loves his characters in all their strength and weakness. He is one of the most significant young writers in Germany today.

Lernet-Holenia, Austrian and aristocratic, is in the tradition of Rilke. But after making his debut in 1921 with a slender volume of poetry he passed to historical drama and then to Viennese comedy for the stage. He now alternates between delicate, charming rococo novels and amusing, witty stage comedies.

Karl Benno von Mechow is a new writer who keeps close to nature and to the soil. His first novel, *The Country Year*, is a fine study of the seasons against the background of the German countryside. Von Mechow is a farmer by profession.

Dwinger is another of the Nature school. Thrown very young into the War, captured by the Cossacks at seventeen, he learned to know the horrors of human life early. Now that he has written several autobiographical books which stand out for their amazing, uncompromising realism, he is turning to quiet, restful novels in the Knut Hamsun vein. There is throughout Dwinger's work a natural Slavonic pathos (his mother was Russian), a devotion to truth, and a strong moral sense.

EDWIN ERICH DWINGER. BORN 1898

Much of his work has been coloured by his experience as a young prisoner of war in Russia.

Two other writers should be mentioned in any comprehensive review of the young: Karl Zuckmayer and Arnolt Bronnen. Bronnen was one of the most sensational Expressionists ten years ago, producing four plays in that style. Recently, however, he has turned Nationalist. His two books since his con-

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CARL ZUCKMAYER. BORN 1896

A playwright. He adapted "What Price Glory" for the German stage, and wrote the scenario of "The Blue Angel", for Marlene Dietrich and Emil Jannings.

version are *O.S.*, which deals with the problem of Upper Silesia, lost by Germany to Poland after the War, and *Rossbach*, whose hero is one of the numerous nationalistic adventurers in post-War Germany. Bronnen's pilgrimage from Expressionism to Nationalism has not increased his reputation in the German literary world, where most young writers are liberal or left in sympathy.

Zuckmayer is Germany's most distinguished young dramatist. Since 1920, when his first play appeared, he has worked his way to the very front rank. In 1925 he won public success with *The Happy Vineyard*, a rich study of life in the wine-growing districts of the Rhineland. After the mad patterns and crude pathology of the Expressionistic school, this joyous play came like a deep breath of fresh air. Gaiety was almost taboo in those dreary days, and Zuckmayer helped to break the spell. Here was a young dramatist who dared to affirm life, who dared to be joyful.

Zuckmayer took the simple life of a wine-grower and his daughter and made a rich folk-piece. Between that work and his latest play, *The Captain of Köpenick*, the most brilliant German stage success in years, Zuckmayer has kept to his high standard. Drawing his themes from the very heart of German life, he has added a rich list of plays to the drama of his country. Since his themes are essentially "popular" in the best sense, his reputation has remained confined to German-speaking countries. But it is just this authentic native tang which makes his work the most significant produced by any young dramatist.

TRANSLATIONS

The following is a substantially complete list of English translations of works of those younger German writers discussed in the foregoing article. The original German title of the book is also given, in parentheses, wherever available:

PAUL ALVERDES: *The Whistlers' Room (Die Pfeiferstube), Covici-Friede, 1930.* GÜNTHER BIRKENFELD: *A Room in Berlin (Dritter hof links), Liveright, 1930.* BRUNO BREHM: *They Call It Patriotism (Apis und Este), Little, Brown, 1932.* ARNOLT BRONNEN: *no translations to date.* EDWIN ERICH DWINGER: *Prisoner of War, a Siberian Diary (Die Armee hinter Stacheldrecht), Knopf, 1930.* ERICH EBERMAYER: *no translations to date.* GEORG FINK: *Thirty-one Families under Heaven (Mich Hungert), Liveright, 1931.* ERNST GLAESER: *Class of 1902 (Jahrgang 1902), Viking, 1929.* OSKAR MARIA GRAF: *Prisoners All, Knopf, 1928.* HEINRICH HAUSER: *Bitter Waters, Liveright, 1929; Fair Winds and Foul (Die letzten Segelschiffe), Liveright, 1932; Thunder Above the Sea (Donner überm Meer), Liveright, 1931.* MANFRED HAUSMANN: *Salute to Heaven (Salut gen Himmel), Knopf, 1931.* KURT HEUSER: *The Journey Inward (Die Reise ins Innere), Viking, 1932.* HERMANN KESTEN: *no translations to date.* PETER MARTIN LAMPEL: *no translations to date.* ALEXANDER LERNET-HOLENIA: *no translations to date.* KLAUS MANN: *Alexander (Alexander, Roman der Utopie), Brewer & Warren, 1930; The Fifth Child, Boni & Liveright, 1927.* KARL BENNO VON MECHOW: *no translations to date.* PETER MENDELSSOHN: *no translations to date.* ERNST PENZOLDT: *The Marvellous Boy (Der arme Chatterton), Harcourt, Brace, 1931.* ERICH MARIA REMARQUE: *All Quiet on the Western Front (Im Western nichts neues), Little, Brown, 1929; The Road Back (Der Weg zurück), Little, Brown, 1931.* LUDWIG RENN: *War (Krieg), Dodd, Mead, 1929; After War (Nach Krieg), Dodd, Mead, 1931.* JOSEPH ROTH: *Flight Without End (Die Flucht ohne Ende), Doubleday, Doran, 1930; Job (Hiob), Viking, 1931.* ANNA SEGHERS: *The Revolt of the Fishermen (Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara), Longmans, Green, 1930.* W. E. SÜSKIND: *The Web of Youth (Jugend), Brewer & Warren, 1931.* BRUNO TRAVEN: *no translations to date.* F. C. WEISKOPF: *no translations to date.* OTTO ZAREK: *no translations to date.* KARL ZUCKMAYER: *no translations to date.*

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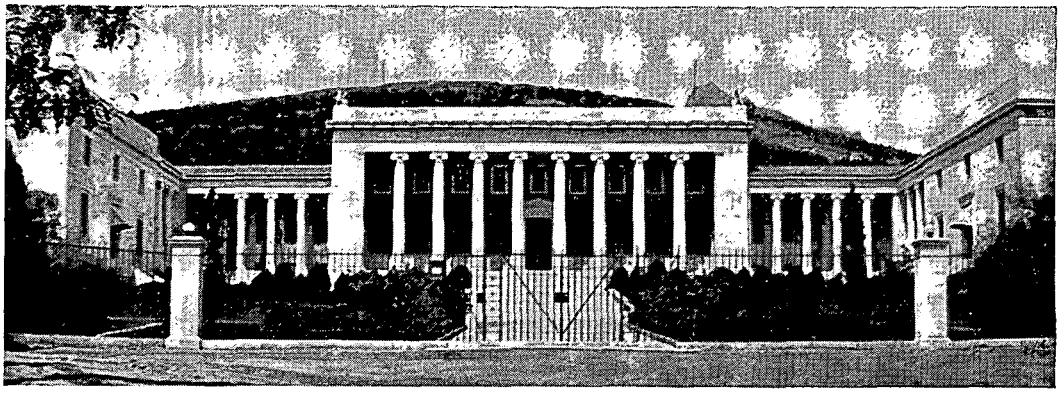

THE GENNADEION LIBRARY AT ATHENS

The books were given by Dr. Joannes Gennadius, the ground by the Greek government, the money for the building by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. (Photograph by the author.)

"I DO NOT FEAR THE GREEKS"

AN ACCOUNT OF THE GENNADEION LIBRARY AT ATHENS

by Arthur Stanley Riggs

When Virgil wrote that often misquoted line (*Aeneid II:49*), *"Timeo Danaos et dona ferentis"*, he did not know much about Americans to come two thousand years after him. It is quite equally certain that he did not realize a Greek gift could clarify the involved history of what for centuries were Roman provinces. Indeed, it is to be doubted not a little that Dr. Joannes Gennadius himself even yet fully perceives the scope of his gift to the world of the magnificent and astonishing collection of books, manuscripts and miscellany that form the Gennadeion Library of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens. Certainly the world of special students is only beginning to learn that the Gennadeion houses something much more vital and far-reaching than a group of rare volumes. Mere collectors of rare books, of course, know where the Florence Homer of 1488 is, and who sold Dr. Gennadius his superb first editions of Æschylus and Plato. But books gathered because of their rarity or external beauty mean relatively nothing. Exquisite bindings and solitary copies of enormous price do nothing for the world from their glass cases, and really plague their owners with a stiffish sort of mental dyspepsia. But if one can collect a lot of books exceedingly valuable because of their content as well as their rarity, and then, with a fine and whimsical disregard for their cost, set them in open shelves for any inquiring student actually to use under very modest restrictions, he has gone far toward sprouting wings and proving that Virgil was, after all, very Latin.

I love my Virgil, of course; but there are

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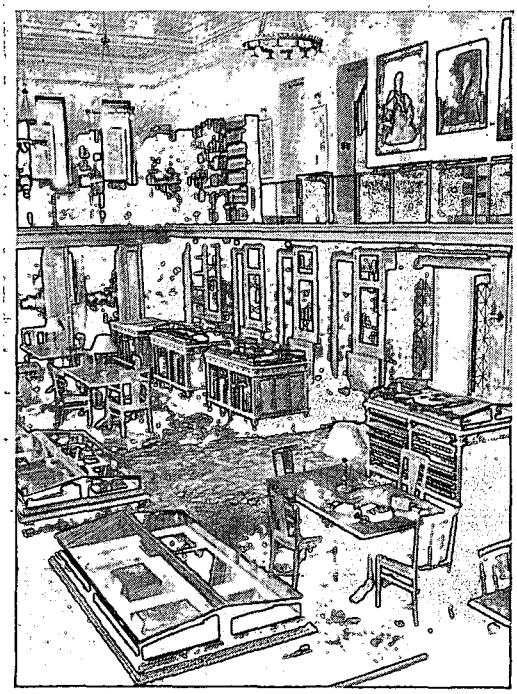

Looking down from the gallery across the main room of the Gennadeion. The glass cases contain some of the rarer editions, though all but two of the books shown here as illustrations were in the shelves. Scholars of any nation may avail themselves of the privileges of the Gennadeion on complying with a few simple necessary rules. The portrait of Dr. Gennadius in Greek costume by Philippe de Laszlo hangs to the left of the door, that of Mme Gennadius to the right.

times when even the universality of the Virgilian thought fails to track as closely as Professor Mackail would have us believe. This gift of the library seems to be such an instance. Certainly the gentle, snowy-haired former diplomat, Dr. Gennadius, now living in modest retirement on a Surrey country estate with his charming lady, was actuated by no personal motive when, in 1922, he made his gift. True, he got safely rid of what certainly must have been a source of grave anxiety and expense. But it is worth noticing that his gift, unlike the pretentious gifts of many others of other races, carried no dead-hand clause in its deed, sought no advertising, and was free to all men of whatever tongue who could make proper use of it.

The beginnings of Dr. Gennadius's great collection date back a lifetime, and the story of his magnificent gift is not nearly so well known as it should be. I am sure also that when Dr. Gennadius reads this in the retirement of his library at East Molesey he will shake his white head sadly over the incorrigibility of Americans, and gently rebuke me in his next letter. Nevertheless, after having pored in rapt enthusiasm last summer over volumes so priceless it seemed all but sacrilege for an ordinary hand to touch them, I vowed that no false reluctance should keep me from celebrating the treasure awaiting in that library the affectionate and understanding eye.

It was in March of 1922 that an adequate reference library for the American School of Classical Studies at Athens was first given practical form by Dr. Gennadius's gift of his personal collection. Two months later, the Carnegie Corporation of New York appropriated $200,000 for a building to be erected on ground given for the purpose by the Greek Government. Changes in the size and shape of the ground enabled a revision of the plans and an avoidance of cramping. Then in December of the same year the Carnegie Corporation gave $50,000 more to make it possible to build the entire structure of the snowy white marble of Naxos.

There is a whole story in that simple statement. It seems amazing that in a country world-famous for its marbles, with the ancient quarries of Pentelicus plainly in sight only eleven miles away, there should be the least bother about the material. But the yawning gashes in the slopes of Mount Pentelicus lay deserted for years, and the marble seemed

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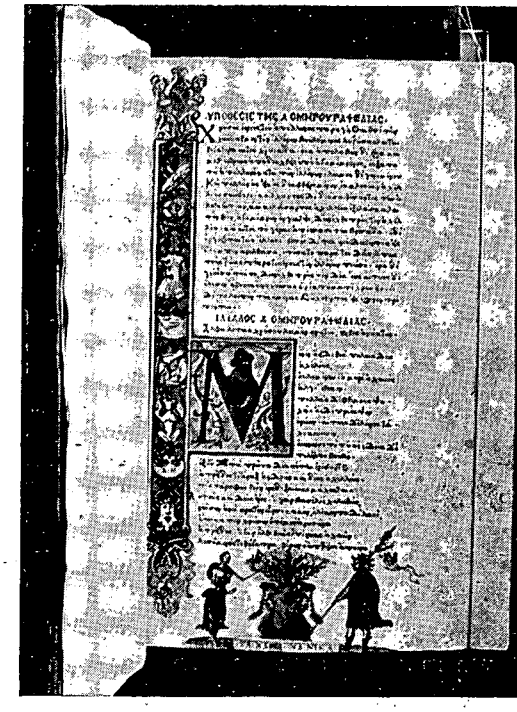
of a poorer quality than in ancient times. So the Naxian stone, though on an island more than an hundred miles away, was used.

There was romance, too, in the actual building: the employment on this one job of forty-five out of the hundred expert marble-workers of the Capitol; the providing of work every day for the hungry, swarming refugees from Asia Minor, so numerous they had to be fenced out with wire and be hired in alternating three-day shifts; the supervising of the work by the foreman who had handled the men during the restoration of the Propylæa on the Acropolis; the speed and skill with which the work progressed and the benefits it conferred upon the city.

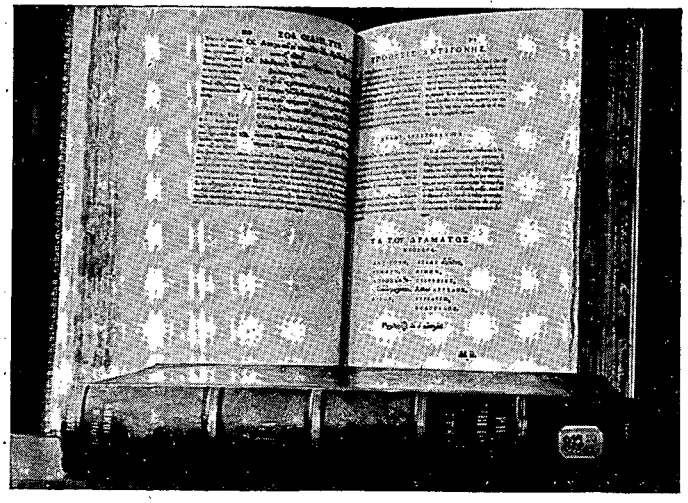
The corner stone was laid May 25, 1923, and Christmas Day saw the lintel of the main doorway in position. So well had the details been planned and executed that the completed structure was formally dedicated, notwithstanding delays, on April 23 and 24, 1925. There is no room here to tell the tale as it should—and some day will be—told, for we are concerned with the soul of the Library rather than the integument containing it. And what a many-faceted soul that is! Like the perfectly cut diamond, whatever the



The illuminated first page of Homer's Iliad. The two volumes include the Odyssey, and were printed in Florence in 1488. This is the first printed edition of the greatest of the classics.

view, the gleam held by the treasure is omnipresent, now golden, now dark, now sanguine, but always perfect.

Nor did Dr. Gennadius regard his treas-



The Stephanus (Paris, 1568) Edition of Sophocles is a magnificent folio in red morocco. The pages show (left) the end of the "Oedipus Tyrannus" and (right) the "Hypothesis" and cast of the "Antigone". Though this is the oldest Sophocles in the Gennadeion, it is not the most beautiful in binding. The 1603 bilingual Stephanus in green morocco is considered by Dr. Gennadius a finer specimen of the binder's art.

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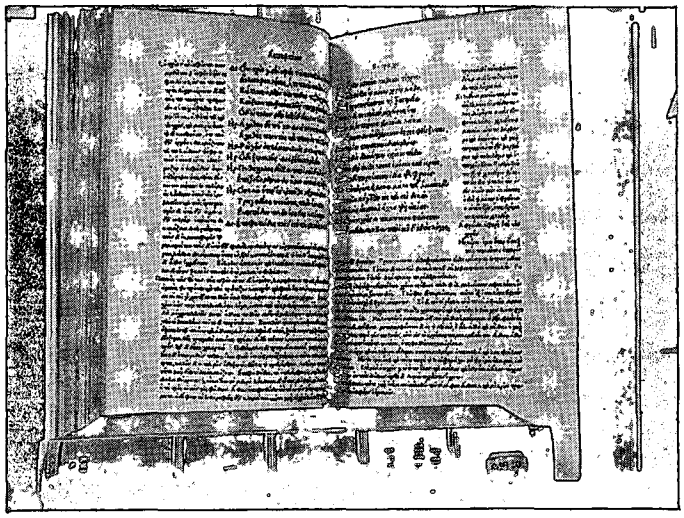

The first printed edition of Aristophanes, published by Aldus in Venice in 1498. Only nine of the comedies were included. The pages displayed show the elaborate diacritical commentary of the scholiasts.

ure as complete when he had given it away. In the preface to his partial manuscript catalogue, sent to Athens in December of 1924, eleven months before the librarian began to unpack and install the books, Dr. Gennadius wrote: "The packing of the Library had hardly been completed when I began again, or rather continued, to acquire more books. On the one hand I was attracted by desirable items in the booksellers' catalogues received from everywhere, and on the other hand desired to supplement as far as possible the existing gaps. I hope I may be enabled to continue to do so as long as life and the wherewith means last".

Dr. Gilbert C. Scoggin was the first librarian, and one can imagine the joy he had in unpacking those one hundred and ninety-two cases, "each measuring two feet cube, tin-lined, soldered water-tight, and bound with iron hoops". There was a partial catalogue only to go by. Dr. Gennadius had worked two years steadily, yet hardly 10,000 of the 25,000 works in the collection had been catalogued; and even now, though the Library has been in use three years, the catalogue is not complete. Dr. Scoggin unpacked, and eventually arranged in sequence the volumes already catalogued, so as to make them readily available for research.

This was a very slow and arduous task, but eventually scholars had at their disposal the most remarkable and comprehensive collection in the world covering manuscripts in Greek and dealing with Greek themes, the Greek classics, truly regal works on archaeology and art, geography and travel, the ancient history of Greece, memoirs and biographies, the Kingdom of Greece, Greek linguistics, modern Greek literature, and the War of Independence. In addition to these catalogued and systematically arranged works, there are the untold riches of the remaining three-fifths of the collection and an incredible mass of newspaper and magazine clippings, cartoons, etc. It will take years, in all probability, to prepare a complete card catalogue with essential bibliographical data for each entry. Meantime, Dr. Gennadius goes on adding to his gift; poets, historians, archaeologists, other libraries and friends of the American School in Athens contribute yet further volumes; and the fame of the Gennadeion increases.

Here, then, is the great world-center for the study of both Greek and Byzantine par-

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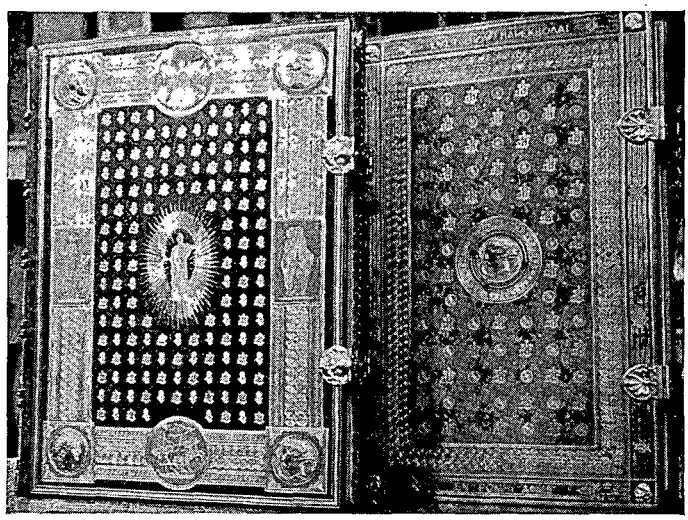

Two magnificent examples of binding. To the left is a modern work by Notor, "La Femme dans l'Antiquité Grecque". It was bound by Constantine Hutchins for Dr. Gennadius in crimson morocco with gold and blue decoration and tooling, and gold medallions in relief. On the right is a copy of Eustathius's Commentaries on Homer printed in 1512 at Rome, and, like the Notor, in a modern binding of blue morocco, gold tooled and ornamented. Dr. Gennadius himself designed both bindings.

ticipation in world history. Already the Joannes Gennadius Fund for Byzantine Studies has been established, and further gifts to it and other Library funds will soon make possible the elucidation of many obscure periods of whose meaning we now know but little. In this age of the world it certainly seems right that the adult of culture and of means enough to go abroad should have the privilege of education quite as much as the poor and the child. At the same time it must not be overlooked that archaeology and research are effective and valuable only in so far as they develop human values. Our concept of history must be developmental—I hardly dare say evolutionary for fear of being misread—if we are to profit by the stores of knowledge pure science opens to us every day. In other words, the inherent human values of the past, linked to present needs, can be so made to emerge from mere facts, that all mankind will benefit. As the Gennadeion is planned, it seems likely that this will be the major aspect of its usefulness; and if this is so, the library and its wise purpose will constitute one of the greatest gifts man has ever made his fellows.

It is most appropriate that this should be so. The debt of civilized man to Greek thought is both profound and permanent. If in addition to the riches of poetry and philosophy, character and purpose we have already received from Greece, this new fountain of old knowledge enables us the better and more wisely to think of the past and improve the present through its lessons, we shall have seen a reflowering of the Greek spirit, shall have learned to think historically in terms of the world rather than of one small State, shall indeed have absorbed into our twentieth-century activities a living sense of the vitality of that intimate kinship of the human spirit with art and science and natural beauty so little generally perceived.

No, I do not fear a Greek, even when bearing a priceless gift!

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SHAKESPEARE, HALL CAINE, AND REINCARNATION

by Perriton Maxwell

WHATEVER place among the novelists of the generation just past a more mature critical opinion and a remoter evaluation of that period in British letters may assign to the late Sir Hall Caine, he will at least have to his everlasting credit a careful and zealous devotion to his task of depicting life as he saw and felt it and the possession of a deep spiritual nature. And of this latter quality only those who were very close to him were ever aware.

It was my privilege to know Hall Caine intimately (long before knighthood had been conferred upon him) during my five years' residence in London. As editor of the leading British popular magazine I contracted for all his last fiction and many of his last articles.

Sir Hall had two fine homes in London during the period in which I knew him. The first of these was at 62 Avenue Road, Regent's Park. The second was a large house known as Heath Brow. With a deep garden in its rear, it was perched at the high upper end of Hampstead Heath, from which vantage point a gorgeous panorama of London's busy "City", with St. Paul's Cathedral dominating the scene, spread at one's feet. This view was most impressive from a small platform erected by the author at the end of the garden. And it was here, under the trees —a green proscenium arch—and in the twilight of an autumn day with the world's metropolis below bathed in a golden haze that the creator of *The Deemster, The Eternal City*, and *The Woman Thou Gavest Me* first mentioned his serious interest in things occult. Of course, like most writers of imaginative literature, he had read widely in this field. But it was not for material to be wrought into fiction that he delved into the mystic records or talked with this renowned mahatma or that exploited miracle-worker from the Far East. Hall Caine was genuinely interested in the spiritual feats of Indian yogis and the teachings of Brahma, genuinely concerned with the awards and punishments of Vishnu and Siva.

To be sure, he was active in politics, as he was active in everything pertaining to the drama of being. But deep in his soul and uppermost in his thoughts were the spiritual problems of existence and the eternal query: "After death, what?" And to that question which has always puzzled mankind he sought (and I think found, to his own satisfaction) the answer in the theory of Reincarnation, the passing from one animal body into another of one's personality, now on a higher plane and now on a lower, according to the acts of the latest possessor of the personality. Out of this grew the strange obsession that in his latter days moulded the thought of this craftsman in words.

I doubt if any of his associates and perhaps none of his immediate family knew of his faith in the doctrines of the ancient Oriental philosophers and teachers.

"I can see the absolute logic of grafting the blossoming branch of Brahmanistic be-

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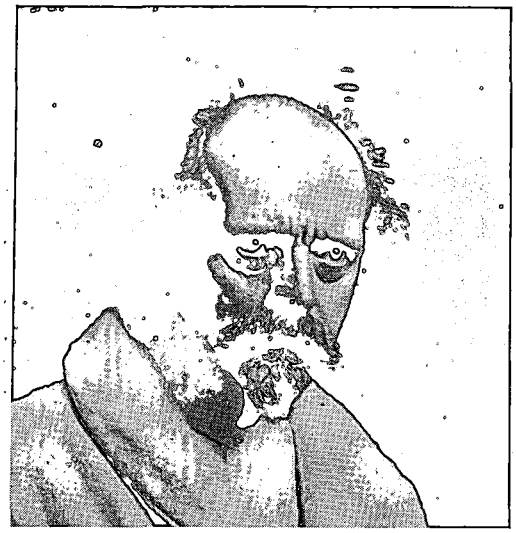

HALL CAINE

A pose which some readers may consider corroboration of the late author's startling conviction that he was the reincarnation of Shakespeare.

lief onto the stark cross of Christ," he once remarked with his usual vigour and earnestness. "*That* would be the salvation of the human race, the consummation of the long looked-for 'brotherhood of man'."

At the time the novelist made this declaration he had not yet turned to a study of the Vedic religions or accepted the theory of the re-embodied soul. That was the final result of his intellectual penetration into spiritism, clairvoyance, and the like.

I once asked him about the folklore of the Isle of Man—was it like that of the Irish, the Scotch, or the northern English counties in its mysticism and its imagery?

"It is like none of those," said Hall Caine. "To my mind the Manx legends are much more subtle and at the same time more terrifying than those of the neighbouring lands. Even the rich store of Irish folk-tales does not contain as many incidents of violent death and inexplicable disappearances. The Manx native likes his drama bloody and full of the noise of battle, the shouting of lusty warriors, the screeching of ghosts on the gale-swept headlands.

"I find it unwise to talk openly about such things as spirits or the progress of the soul or even immortality," he mourned. "There is so little understanding of these things even among the highly intelligent. Most people shy away from any discussion of life after death. They seem to think there is something unseemly in such talk or that it should be left entirely to the parson in the pulpit for discussion. For my part the next step in my own evolution is as interesting to speculate upon as the next session of Parliament or tomorrow's railway journey. We don't think enough of what we may be doing on some other sphere after death or (what is more engaging) the form in which we are likely to return to earth and the new work that will be waiting for us here—the newest job in our latest rôle. I see nothing strange or unnatural in the theory of reincarnation. Certainly one's return to earth for a definitely useful purpose is much more appealing to the thinking individual than the idea of a heavenly home where there is nothing but an endless round of psalm singing and a perpetual promenading along streets of gold. The orthodox paradise can no longer appeal to the intellectually honest."

Why was Sir Hall Caine a secretive mystic? Why did he live and die in the belief that somewhere, somehow, he would return to earth in another form than the one with which we are familiar? Was this new re-embodied spirit to be that of beggar or king, of priest or warrior, of politician or player? Would his soul in its new habiliments hold a being of lesser intelligence or one with the power to remould civilization? We talked of these things, giving our imaginations full play.

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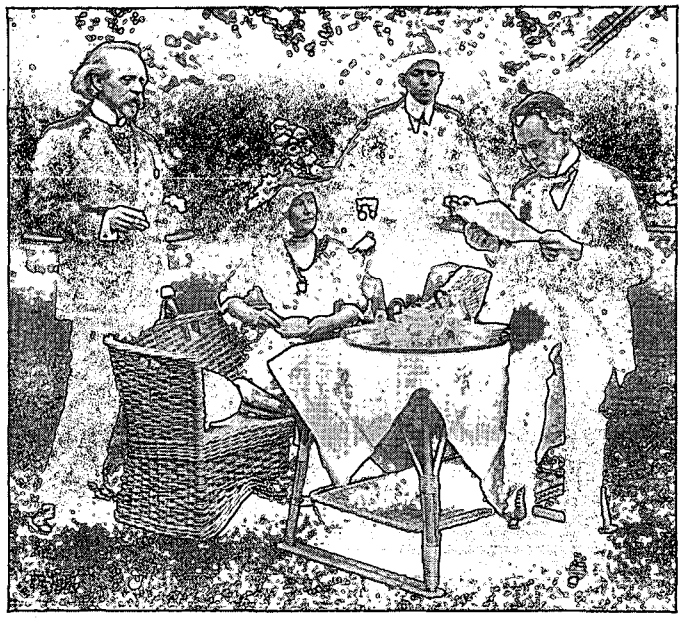

Sir Hall Caine and his family in the garden of their home in Regent's Park. Behind Lady Hall Caine stands Ralph Hall Caine, publisher and Member of Parliament; on the right is Derwent Hall Caine, actor and Member of Parliament.

"Whatever my new life," said he, "I hope that it will be one of usefulness, one of creative productivity. I should like to come back as England's foremost dramatist in the twenty-first century. Yes, I should like that better than anything else I can think of."

There was a strain of Irish blood in Hall Caine, though he would never acknowledge it further than to say that his father was "a mixture of Cumberland and Ballaugh", the latter being the parish on the northwest of the Isle of Man nearest the Irish Coast. His grandmother was as full of blood-curdling yarns and tales of the Evil Eye as the veriest witch-doctor in Ireland. She was full of the arts of sorcery, she was wise in the rhythms of incantations, she knew the unforgivable sin, and she remembered more than one funeral pyre laid for the punishment of the spell-casting demons in human form among the wild Manx folk back in the frightful forties. You will find suggestions of his grandmother's yarns in the earlier novels of Hall Caine—*The Deemster, The Bondman* and *The Manxman*. The old woman dubbed the boy "Hommy Beg", which is Manx for "little Tommy". (Hall Caine was christened Thomas, but dropped it when he took to his pen and inkpot.)

With such a mentor, in such dramatic surroundings as the Isle of Man provided on all sides, the future novelist grew up. And when he went off to Liverpool to earn a livelihood and acquire a profession he carried with him a hundred shuddering stories and a store of strange, inhibiting superstitions.

Upon this foundation of weird beliefs and a constantly growing desire to peer into the unknowable, Hall Caine's nimble mind developed. To the liveliest kind of an imagination there was wedded in him a persistent fondness for every uncanny experience of life. He was physically a weakling, and the mental and spiritual side of him expanded through the years out of all proportion to his bodily growth until he became chiefly a highly sensitive psychic entity.

Recalling again the golden evening when the novelist-playwright and I stood at the end of his garden at Heath Brow gazing

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into the sunset and he startled me by a single phrase, let me report exactly what was then said, for it is the meat of this article and my reason for writing it.

We had been talking of reincarnation and the possible re-embodiment of celebrated personages—of Julius Caesar coming back to earth in the character of Napoleon Bonaparte, of Joan of Arc returning in the person of Edith Cavell, of Voltaire appearing in the physical disguise of George Bernard Shaw. I was enjoying the humour of the game, of trying to make psychic twins of the great ones of the past and the not so great, perhaps, of the present. But Sir Hall stopped me with a quick gesture and a pained expression.

"It is no laughing matter, this return of the splendid dead," said he. He was very sober and quite tense. His eyes were fixed in that strange, absorbed manner of his, staring through the brilliant veil of the sinking sun into—infinity. I saw that he was more than serious and so respected his mood. He went on: "The least of us who have been put here to do a job are probably completing the work that someone, going on before, left unfinished. Why not? You can't destroy the logic of reincarnation with a gibe, my dear fellow. I am as sure that everyone of us now alive was here on this planet not once but many times before as I am sure I can see the dome of St. Paul's out there in the sunlight".

"But what", I asked, "is the sense of it—this being born and dying, now as one type of human being and then as another, now in one place and then in another, and so on *ad infinitum*?"

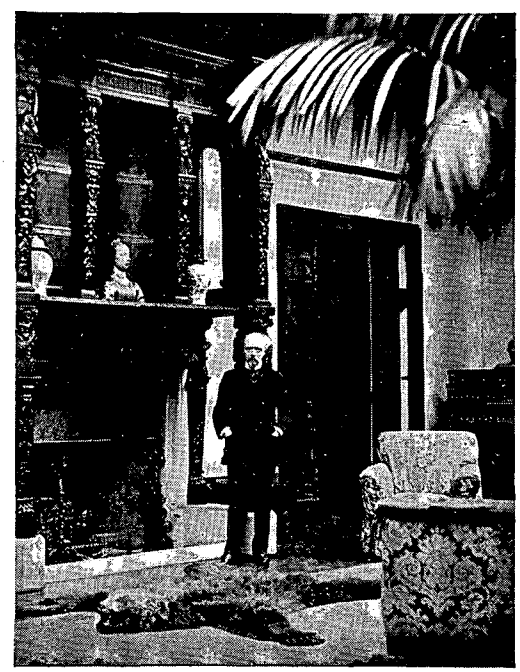
"If I could tell you *that* I should be able to unravel the riddle of the Universe," was Sir Hall's reply. "But I *do* know this: No man or woman ever finishes his or her work satisfactorily in one short lifetime."

We stood for a while gazing into the disappearing sun. I broke the silence. "Who do you think *I* might have been in my last incarnation?" I asked.

"Ah, that's another unanswerable query," replied the novelist. "Few of us, I fancy, can even guess our former identity. But we can weigh and measure our personalities, note what gifts nature may have bestowed upon us, add to the sum total of these our most compelling predilection, our keenest admiration for some figure of the past, and concentrate on our desire to be like that one."

"That does not seem to me to be enough to convince one that he is actually the re-embodiment of his choice of dead men," said I.

"It is utterly impossible to explain what enables a man to understand a conviction of fact that is conveyed to him only through his intuitions. I have a grasp of some things



Hall Caine in 1913 at his home, 62 Avenue Road, Regent's Park, London.

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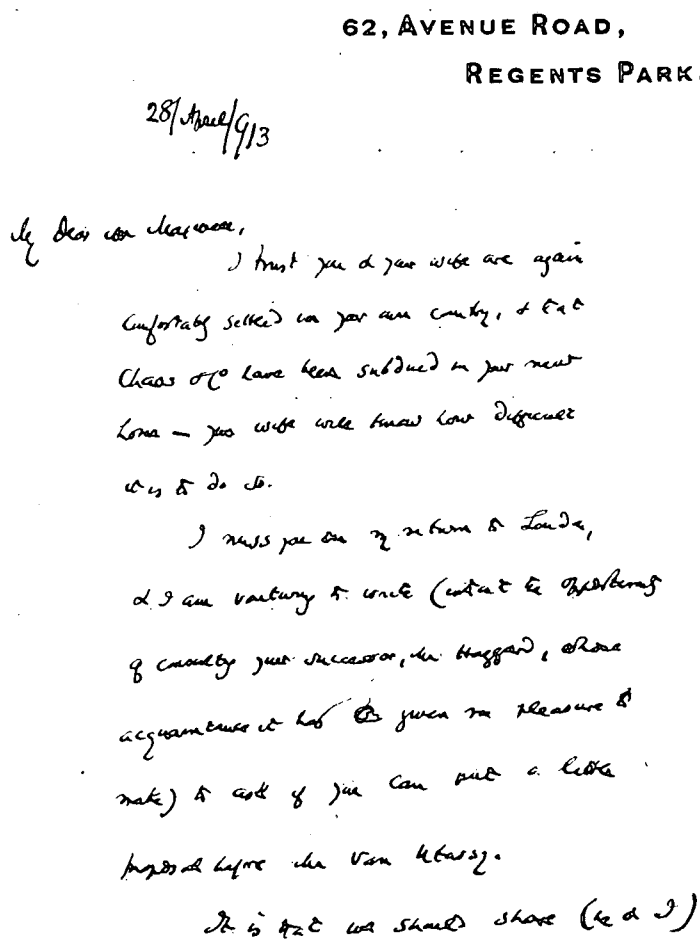
62, AVENUE ROAD,
REGENTS PARK.

28/April/913

My Dear Mr Maxwell,

I trust you & your wife are again comfortably settled in your own country, & that Chaos & Co have been subdued in your new home — your wife will know how difficult it is to do so.

I miss you on my return to London, & I am venturing to write (without the opportunity of consulting your successor, Mr Haggard, whose acquaintance it has been given me pleasure to make) to ask if you can put a little proposal before Mr Van Utassy.

It is that we should share (he & I)

A letter from Hall Caine to the author of the accompanying article, showing the microscopic handwriting in which he composed all his books—including the 3,000,000-word manuscript of his last work, the "Life of Jesus".

which I could never find words to express. And you will grant that I have some ability in expressing my thoughts. I can see, feel, and hear certain phenomena which I couldn't describe if I wrote or spoke about them for eternity."

"Then by the same process of reasoning—or intuition—you have some idea of who *you* were in a previous incarnation?" I did not expect the astounding reply he finally made.

"If I was anyone of any importance before I became Hall Caine I could not have been a lesser personage than William Shakespeare."

I searched his face, rather expecting to find there a smile or a quizzical expression. He was as grave as the Bard's own mask in the church at Stratford. I had nothing to say and waited for Sir Hall to go on. He did so presently.

"Is it too big a task for me to carry about Shakespeare's cloak, or am I too insignificant to hold the mirror up to nature in a medium that hadn't been developed in the great

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Bard's day? Of course, I could never write as Shakespeare wrote—no man ever will. But is it too bizarre a thought to think that one Hall Caine, born a little less than three hundred years after the first of English dramatists had stepped over the border, should to the best of his comparatively small ability do something to carry on the tradition of Elizabethan literature?"

Suddenly the speaker looked worried and, turning, he scanned my face as he said:

"You won't, of course, say anything of this to anyone, will you—not at least until after I am gone?"

I gave him my assurances of silence. And if ever the shape of a man departed from this life was taken on by the living, the figure and countenance of William Shakespeare were merged at that moment into the person, there in the twilight, of my friend Hall Caine. Men may laugh at the thought of reincarnation, ridicule the admirable Manxman as I have described him, seeing in his own mirror, as he doubtless felt in his bones, the presence of another and greater than he, the perpetual occupant of his fleshly tenement for some strange purpose unknown to anyone. But call his belief what you will it was a thing of profound reality to this man and thinker.

It is well to remember that the miracle of radio a generation ago would have been scoffed at if described. Perhaps the reincarnation theory so freely acknowledged by Sir Hall Caine may be an accepted commonplace a generation hence. Who knows?

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A BATTLE OF TWO LANGUAGES

by Albert Parry

It is a commonplace of contemporary discussion that two great forces, collectivism and individualism, are now joined in battle for the control of the world. And these two forces are usually described by the countries in which they have made the greatest strides: American individualism and Russian collectivism are the protagonists in this great world conflict. In this paper I should like to illustrate the linguistic aspect of the struggle; to show that the languages of the two countries have already met in combat and are making ever more serious inroads on each other.

The thesis may seem fantastic until the data of the many initial skirmishes between the two tongues is recited. We see an endless procession of American pilgrims pass through the Slavonic room of the New York Public Library, where they sweat over Russian grammars and dictionaries. Enticing advertisements appear in large American dailies: "Russian—Learn the Language of the Hour!" In the city of New York alone, between twenty and thirty schools and individual teachers advertise courses in Russian. Similar advertisements are to be found in the public prints of Chicago and Detroit. Still other Russian teachers do not advertise but depend on casual contacts to bring them pupils. Many Americans study the language by themselves, with the help of textbooks or special phonograph records. One firm in New York has sold, within a period of six months, some eight hundred and thirty sets of Russian-course phonograph records. They reach from two to three thousand students, for these sets are rather costly, and many customers, pinched by the depression, combine in groups to buy and study them. The enthusiasm for Russian sometimes comes to America by curious detours: the man who sells these sets in New York is an American Jew who learned the Russian language in Japan.

Several American colleges and universities cram courses of the Russian language or literature or both into their curricula. Last fall it was reported that the number of higher American institutions honouring the Russian tongue has reached sixteen. Even the backwoods and the prairies seek their Russian mentors. A young Russian friend of mine in the Northwest has enough private pupils getting headaches from Russian declensions to carry him through the local university. And what a variety of charges he has! Chinese students sent to America on Boxer indemnities who have suddenly seen the light of Lenin; a Finnish dairy specialist hankering to go to Russia for the good of her cows; old-time American Slavophiles now itching to read Tolstoy and Turgenev in original and thus grasp the key to the new Russian soul; second generation Russian Jews born West of Chicago re-learning the language of their allrightnick parents in order to read Stalin's speeches and Mayakovsky's verses in their vigourous raw. Among my own charges I had a Hollywood execu-

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tive with a shrewd eye on possible Soviet-American film co-operation. In New York and elsewhere I know of several Negroes, mostly from the West Indies, whose Russian is peculiarly musical—perhaps because they are soft-voiced Negroes, perhaps because they learned Russian in Moscow with only a preliminary training on this side. Enemies as well as friends of the Soviets now cheer for Russian verbs. James W. Gerard, former American ambassador to Germany, in a recent adress, exhorted the Columbia scholars of journalism to learn Russian. He would learn Russian himself were he young, he said, for "something mysterious is going to happen in that Oriental country".

The Far and the Near East send their students to Moscow, while Western Europe, not unlike America, studies the language of the new power at home. It is claimed that in England and other West European lands, the Russian linguistic phonograph records have already sold to the extent of some fifteen thousand sets. Recently, an anti-Soviet Russian journalist came from Strasburg with the cheering news that many White Russian refugees there make a good livelihood not so much by serving caviar or strumming balalaika as by teaching Russian to the Soviet-infatuated Alsatian intellectuals. In Berlin and Paris, Russian emigré teachers of the German and the French languages to visitors from the Americas were surprised to discover that there arose among their clientèle as lively a demand for their native Muscovite as there has always been for their adopted French and German. Business men and radicals of France and Germany rub elbows with expatriates from America in these classes. One of these teachers now wants to migrate from Paris to New York with the sole idea of teaching Russian here. He is sure that Jimmy Walker's domain holds enough promise for him, even though Jimmy himself is said to prefer a fluent Yiddish to the most polished Russian chat.

II

But the English language, too, holds its own, and constantly improves its record. Not the aristocrats, and not the small white-collar groups, as was the case hitherto, but the vast plebs of the world seem to be taking to it. Mass methods of teaching it are used consciously (radio and victrola), and inadvertently (cinema). In Germany, the English radio courses of Mr. W. Mann and others have been enthusiastically received by a large and mixed audience, as have the phonograph records of English lessons. In Chile, the government-owned newspaper, *La Nación*, went into the business of teaching English over the radio—for the sake of the popularity of the Chilean government, more than for any other purpose. In Turkey, the sedate teachers of old King's English are reported to be incensed against their pupils who return from American talkies enriched by Yankeeisms and Noo-Yorkese. The very fact that the lively American talk is preferred to the prim English theory shows that it is the masses who learn the language. English plays in the original are being produced in Germany, Austria, Russia, and other countries, sometimes with no English or American actors and directors to help the valiant aborigines. A surprising number of these attempts are staged by workers or clerks of the lower strata, and not simply by idling aesthetes. In Vienna, the Urania, which is the "common folks' university" with an enrollment of some 45,000 impoverished students, reports that there are in the organization twice as many students of English as there are of French—and this in the city where French has been a favourite tongue for gen-

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erations. In China, bandits who in October, 1930, abducted the Rev. Dr. Nelson, an American missionary, are still keeping him, having decided that he must not go free until he teaches them English.

But it is in Russia that the English tongue has had the greatest appeal to the masses. It is estimated that there are about ten thousand Russians, mostly workers, attending special English courses in Moscow and other large cities. Add to this number, scattered groups learning English outside of these well organized schools such as the Moscow Technicum for Foreign Languages; also add people learning English privately; also those who have already learned whatever they could from a teacher and are now rounding out their knowledge from books and conversational practice with American engineers and tourists,—and the number of Russians who have become acquainted with the English language since the World War will run into several score thousands. This number grows constantly. A writer recently exclaimed in a Moscow publication: "Thousands, nay, tens of thousands of workers from the bench are eager to master the fundamentals of the English language!" Jack P. Morrissey, a disillusioned American engineer, wrote in a recent issue of the *Saturday Evening Post*: "Peasants who can neither read nor write Russian are trying to study English because it is the language of America, and everything American, except its politics, is wonderful".

It is an axiom that almost any American with some degree of literacy, once he gets into Russia, receives an invitation to stay and teach English—if he has no other specialty useful to the Five-Year Plan. The English-language newspapers published in Moscow (*Moscow News*) and Stalingrad (The *Industrial Spark*) are being read by the Russians as much as they are by the American engineers and tourists for whom they are published. While none of the twenty-odd Russian newspapers in the United States has as yet any English-language section or column, the Vladivostok *Krasnoye Znamia* (The Red Banner) sports an English column on its front page. It is aimed at the foreign sailors who come into port, but I am informed that it has many native readers as well. The first Anglo-American club organized in Moscow last July is well attended not only by Britishers and the Yankees but by many Russians as well, eager to mingle with the foreigners and practise the language with them.

The chief reason why the Russians are in love with English has been indicated in print and in lecture halls often enough. It is the language of machinery, of mechanical wonders, which they are trying to transplant from American to Russian soil. In order to overtake and outstrip America, as the Russians express it, they must learn her language. "It alone", writes one Gregory Yarros in the *Moscow News*, "can give them access to the original sources of technical information, can help them find the most efficient way of handling the imported implements and machinery . . . to fathom the mysteries of modern technique and expedite the building of Socialism in the U.S.S.R."

But this decision in favour of the English language was by no means sudden. As early as 1914-1916, in many Russian high schools, German was cast aside as the language of the enemy and replaced by English, the language of the Czar's cousin and ally. Thus, the field for the American version of the English language in Russia was amply prepared by the British guns aimed at the Kaiser.

We must remember, too, American movies and Jack London. To the present-day Rus-

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sians, the English language is not only the hum of American machinery. It is also the language of American exoticism. An American tourist not so long ago remarked that the Russians are attracted by the oddity of the English language. It has, indeed, a tang of exotic oddity and beauty to the Russian ear and imagination. The Russians, more than the Americans themselves, are poetic about it; they are aware that it is the tongue not only of Nordics but of Negroes as well, not only of Maine log cabins and Pennsylvania shanties but of California palm-shaded bungalows. The movies have brought to the Russians the landscapes of California and the suits of Palm Beach as something typically American. Jack London's extravaganzas of wild American life are still best-sellers in Russia and the truest portrayals of America to the Russians. The Soviet fondness for Jack London's men of brawn dates from pre-revolutionary days. So do the Russian imitations of Jack London's themes and heroes. The most successful imitator was and is one Alexander Green, née Grinevsky, a Russian Pole, a cousin of Joseph Conrad. He is one of the few pre-revolutionary Russian writers to preserve his popularity in the newer day of Marxian practice, without shifting to the left. Much as Hardy created a mythical Wessex, Grinevsky-Green created for his purposes a subtropical English-speaking colony or dominion, Pocket, with ports of such names as Guel-Glen, Lisse, and Pocket, with people known by English or Scandinavian names. Just as Grinevsky changed his name to the English Green, so many Russians are changing to other English names. For instance, Citizen Vetchinkin advertises in the Moscow *Izvestia* of his change to Citizen Irving. If we are not sure that he changed his name in honour of the American writer, we are at least certain that the many Jacks in new Russia bear witness to the great popularity of Jack London's works among the citizens of the Red republic (although some, of course, are named for Jack Reed), for they spell and pronounce the name in the fashion originally used to denote an English or American Jack.

III

Another reason for new Russia's infatuation with the English language is its telegraphic brevity and simplicity. The Russians themselves, in the hurricane of their revolution, telescoped many of their words (a task really begun by the pre-war Futurists headed by David Burliuk and Vladimir Mayakovsky), and now they appreciate the fact that a word in the English language can be a verb, a noun, and an adjective, all at the same time, that the grammar is simple, that the language itself is irregular and flexible —an admirable weapon of war and conquest. English is rough and ready, just the thing for these terse times of dictatorship. It is a relief from the ponderousness of German, where a sentence stretches from the top to the bottom of a page. You conquer the sentence with much effort, but the turn of the page brings the final word of the sentence, and the word is *nicht*, nullifying all your effort. The English language is also a relief from the over-politeness of French. French has a bad reputation in new Russia, anyway, for it is still remembered as the language of the hated Czar's courtiers and aristocrats. As a language, French is much more difficult to the student than English. The Prussian Ministry of Education has recently ruled that the schools must start with French; school children have been showing an increasing preference for English, but the Prussian officials have ruled it out as too easy. But the Russian officials rule in favour of

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the English language largely because it is easy.

Not that the Russians have given up attempts to make their own language easier to learn. Besides the telescoping of words, the Russians have tried to simplify spelling. But the Russian spelling, being phonetic, was simple enough. What the language really needed was, and still is, a complete latinization of its alphabet. Committee after committee of savants pores over projects of Westernization, but the actual change to Latin letters is far off. It would be too sweeping even for that revolutionary country. Besides, there are certain fundamentals in the Russian language that would make the words, in their Latin dressing, even longer than in their present kaftans. For example, the Russian sound now expressed by a certain letter would require four Latin letters: shch.

The Russian language is not so widely spread in Russia herself as is commonly supposed. Publications in 69 languages are counted in the Soviet Union. Over 100 languages and dialects are being used among the 160 million of Russian inhabitants. Only ninety million people speak Russian. The Soviets, unlike the Czar, do not press the Russian language upon the minorities within the country. They encourage the use of minority dialects in accordance with their theory of local cultural autonomy. True, there is a sporadic attempt now and then to boost the Russian language in the country's periphery "because it was Lenin's language", but when a popular revolutionary poet came from Moscow to recite and lecture in Kharkov—only a two-day trip from the Red capital—the gallery nearly shouted him down, demanding that he use the Ukrainian and not the Russian speech.

The Five-Year Plan, bringing fresh industrial life to the outskirts, inevitably causes increased usage of the Russian language among the Ukrainians, Uzbeks, Kalmucks, and other minorities. But the same Five-Year Plan brings to the distant steppes not only the increased volume of Moscow speech but also the first English ever heard there. For, with the Moscow commissars planning the new enterprises, come the American engineers to execute those enterprises. One doubts whether, indeed, the American engineering talk is the first English ever heard in those steppes. The Russian periphery was exposed to the influence, however slight, of the English language long before the war and the revolution. To Robert College in Constantinople, in the years before 1914, sons of Russian merchants were sent from the Russian South and Southeast, and they came back with a fairly good command of English. The Russian and the British imperialists met in their respective "spheres of influence" in Persia. English managers and engineers appeared in the Siberian gold mines and the Don Basin steel mills. In Eastern Ukraine, a mushroom town sprawled under the name of Yuzovka, and only a few Russian officials were aware that the name was derived from a certain Mr. Hughes, an English promoter of mines and steel.

While the English language is spread strategically throughout the world, the Russian language is spread disadvantageously over one continuous stretch of territory. The English language surrounds the world by flanks, always a better method than a sheer frontal attack. The Russian language boils in its own juice and does not find neighbours willing to spread it. It is the distant Americans and Germans who are now trying to learn "the language of the hour", while such close neighbours as the Poles, the Latvians, the Finns, and the Rumanians remain linguistically aloof. Their old fears of Czarist

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imperialism blend with the new hatred or indifference toward the Communist ideals and practices. Granted that the Russian revolution had a tremendous influence on the masses of the rest of the world, we find only two or three Russian words that have, in the new era, seeped through into the English and other languages. They are: *Soviet, Bolshevik*, and perhaps, *kulak*. Even the word "comrade" is translated into its various foreign equivalents rather than allowed to enter as the Russian *tovarishch*. The Russian *intelligentzia* sneaked into the other languages before the Revolution came. But English (American) words have, since the Revolution, driven into the Russian language in countless hordes, from *Fordism, combine*, and *tractor*, to *gerls* (girls), *bizness* (business), *bootleggeri*, and the late-lamented *prosperity*. In spite of all the sympathy for the Russian cause, the masses of other nations have a hard time trying to grow enthusiastic over the new Russian literature, but Jack London, Upton Sinclair, Sinclair Lewis, Theodore Dreiser, and John Dos Passos, in original and various translations, are gods in Europe, the Soviet Union included. In the past ten years, the works of Upton Sinclair alone have been published in more than two hundred different Soviet Russian editions, totalling more than two million copies.

The average Russian is aware of the complexity of his language for the foreign student, and is apologetic about it. At the same time, he is on the point of laughter when he hears the Russian language butchered by foreign lips. His politeness compels him to suppress this laughter and to come to the foreigner's assistance, not by correcting the latter's Russian but by switching to any other language the two may have in common. The average American, on the other hand, is childishly amazed, delighted, flattered, and flattering when he hears a foreigner speak, or mangle, the English language. This naïve tolerance is, of course, a great help to the spreading of English. The growth of English in other countries is also aided by the well-known Anglo-Saxon "dead ear", dead to the sounds and idioms of other languages. Statistics might show that hundreds of thousands of Americans have studied French or Spanish or German in their schools, but as a rule the lasting knowledge of these languages slides past them as water slides off goose feathers. Because of their defective ear, also because of their geographic isolation and of their inferiority complex, the Americans have neither chance nor nerve to practise the knowledge they get, and for lack of practice they soon lose the knowledge. But the Russians, the Japanese, the French, and almost everybody else will speak and write English once they have studied it, because they are more linguistic, because English is comparatively easy, and because the Americans are very tolerant of foreigners' English. Even though the British may be as yet snobbish to foreigners' English, it is the American attitude that really matters. For it is the average American, and not the average Britisher, that is now the chief sower of the English language throughout the world. George Bernard Shaw, on his recent visit to Russia, noted "the fact that all the Russians who thought they could speak English really spoke American, but the same can be said of all European countries now".

IV

From the foregoing it might seem that the English language emerges from its contact and conflict with the Russian language as an easy victor. Evidently there should be no question as to the victory of the English

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(American) language if even the Russians themselves are turning from their own "language of the hour" to the sterling homeliness of the Yanks' talk and writing.

But paradoxically enough, this very mass love of the Russians for the English language, means, or might mean, in the future, a serious defeat to the tongue of Shakespeare and Dreiser. Any violent infusion of a tremendous body of outsiders into the ranks of the users of a language will not be without a considerable effect upon that tongue. More so in this case, where the body of newcomers is particularly large and brings an intense philosophy of its own, bordering on a religion, along with a distinct and distant racial-lingual make-up.

The Russians, given the slightest opportunity, will change the content as well as the form of the English language. In Moscow, recently, on the initiative of the Communist League of Youth, there was held a public trial over the English text-books. Publishing houses and several authors of English primers and grammars were defendants in absentia. The charges read (to cite the *Moscow News*):

> One author discusses cats and dogs throughout the length of fifty-eight lessons, as if there were no subjects of more immediate and vital interest to students. Another teaches how to behave properly in genteel London society, still another delves into English history and pictures to his pupils the vastness and power of the Empire, quoting the famous boast that the "sun never sets" in the British possessions. These authors show a total lack of understanding of the situation and, of course, are incapable of satisfying the requirements of the new audience.

A Soviet publishing house was reproached at the trial by the judges and witnesses (teachers, students, and workers, many of them Communists) because it "advertised one of its English books in a way which strongly resembled the quack patent medicine advertisements one sees in the New York *Evening Journal* or *Ladies' Home Journal*".

The trial was more than a youthful game, for thanks to its sentence certain English text-books were banned from Russia and others, more "working-class-conscious" were boosted.

Recently, after studying English for seven months, a so-called brigade of students from the Moscow Technicum for Foreign Languages re-wrote a Jack London short story into a play, in English, and produced it on a Moscow stage. The *Moscow News* reported that the play was "modernized in such a manner that London would never recognize it". To wit: "Nambuk, of 'Nambuk, the Liar', the little Indian fish-boy who is caught in a storm at sea, is rescued by Russians, who carry him to the Soviet Union and show him the tremendous purpose behind the Five-Year Plan".

As to the form of the English language, Russians will not be the first to attempt its change. The English spelling, so complicated and illogical to the average foreigner, has already been seriously attacked in Sweden. To quote from a pamphlet issued by the energetic souls of the Anglic Fund:

> The prezent orthografy has mor than 500 waez of speling the 40 od soundz that okur in English wurdz in kurent ues. Leeding eduekaeshonists and reprezentativz of the Pres, who hav been prezent at korsez givn in Stockholm and Uppsala, hav testified that Anglic is a moest efektiv meenz of teeching English to forinerz. Aftr 20 lesnz the puepilz had aquierd a wurking nolij of English, and were aebl to reed not oenly Anglic but aulso eezy spesimenz of English in the egzisting speling.

Imagine what the more revolutionary and even more phonetic Russians may do to the English spelling. Already they sometimes use Djeck instead of Jack and Eerving in-

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stead of Irving. They already make it their *bizness* to denounce *blek-batom* and generally any *djezz* dance music as American bourgeois rot. They made new verbs *foxtrotirovat, charlstonit, shokirovat* out of the verbs to foxtrot, to charleston, to shock (John Cournos remarked lately: "Evidently the Russians did not know what it was to be shocked until they came into contact with the Anglo-Saxon world"). Even before the Revolution, the Russians made *allo* their most common salutation over the telephone, thus transforming the old American "hello". *Boston*, with an outlandish emphasis on the second syllable, was known to many pre-war Russians as a card game first, and as an American city second. To this day old-fashioned *berdanki* are known to many Russian soldiers and civilians, but it is not generally known that this Russian word is of American origin; *berdanka* is a rifle invented by one Berdan, an American colonel. The words *sportivny, sportsmeni, zhokei* (jockey), *footbolisti* are of pre-war English origin and look strange in their Russian dress (contrary to the popular opinion, Americans deserve credit for the spread of these words in Russia no less than the Britishers do; for a number of years before the Revolution, in St. Petersburg and Moscow, there rode to much fame Jimmy Winkfield, a dexterous jockey, an American Negro, now residing in Paris, among other Russian refugees). And now, the Five-Year Plan brings into existence a number of *bekonniye* factories where bacon is made after American methods and often with the help of American specialists. In the English verse of Bezimensky we read "a lier" instead of "a liar", "spet" instead of "spat", "a baw" instead of "a bow". But this is only a modest beginning. The Russians might easily make other, more drastic operations upon the English language. They might do a singular service to annoyed humanity by substituting *de* or *te* for that impossible *the* (for besides the Anglo-Saxons, only the Greeks and Castillians employ this terrible sound). Growing bolder, the Russians might introduce into English a letter denoting the sound *kh*—as well as that sound itself, now deplorably absent in English. While they are busy introducing new sounds into English, they will surely graft a soft *l* on the body of the language, with the result that we shall ultimately have a much more musical tongue.

Also they might tinker with the easy English grammar and make it still easier. They might do something to the past tenses and subjunctives of the English, now too numerous and confusing to Russians and other foreigners. And what delightful legerdemains they have in store for the English idiom! Already, Russians writing to their friends in the United States for books, close their letters with the touching: "I very thank you".

In conclusion, let us risk some suggestions as to the future. It is fairly evident even at this chaotic date that whether or not the Soviet social idea lives, the American mechanical spirit will go on triumphing. It will rule the world in whatever garb, capitalistic or socialistic, the future events may finally force upon it. Whether or not the Soviets spread beyond their present borders, they might make themselves heirs to the English language and carry it on, just as the Barbarians, having conquered the Roman Empire, adopted the main principles and beauties of the Latin language, bringing into it a fresh vigour and perhaps a new meaning, transforming it into several new languages, and causing its old form to linger behind as a dead, defeated tongue.

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A MONTH OF THE THEATRE

RECALLING THE HIGH LIGHTS

by Francis Fergusson

THERE were several good reasons for going to see the annual Players Club presentation, *Troilus and Cressida*, this year, even though it did play only a week and I saw it from a seat in the balcony, about a hundred yards from the stage. I thought it was important to report what happened when a group of our stars attempted Shakespeare. Earlier in the season Mr. Norman Bel-Geddes showed us what one of our foremost designer-directors would make of *Hamlet*. (He made a swift-moving melodrama out of it; pruned away the metaphysics and several of the sub-plots which complete the pattern of the original, and tried to replace the poetry with stage effects —tricks of lighting, mob movements, pageantry.) The questions were: What would our players do with a piece by the greatest actor-playwright? Would they come nearer than a director to the spirit of the original? And these questions were all the more interesting because of the play they had elected to attempt. *Troilus and Cressida* has never been performed professionally in this country before, and it is rarely played in England, or even, I am told, in Germany. One can easily see why this should be. It is full of long-winded debates; the few respectable characters have comparatively unimportant parts, and the general meaning or import of the play is supposed to be too bitter to be acceptable on the stage. The romantic Troilus is shamefully betrayed and flouted by the light-minded Cressida; the Greek and Trojan heroes are shown bickering and moping like spoiled schoolboys; and even Pandarus, with his vicarious delight in other people's lechery, is disillusioned and defeated at the end. Only the foul-mouthed and unhappy Thersites is in his element. The play, in fact, seems to portray the Shakespearian society disorganized: the large heroic souls who should have been Othellos or Coriolanuses, having lost their sense of order, have lost the right to rule; they are hopelessly at odds, and the petty flourish:

"Take but degree away, untune that string,
And, hark what discord follows! each thing meets
In mere oppugnancy . . ."

says Ulysses, who is a kind of philosophic chorus to the play. It is not so much a Shakespeare tragedy as it is a picture of the chaos which follows the fall of a Shakespearian hero. Ulysses, perhaps, gives the clue to the mood of the whole: grave, withdrawn, he understands everything without surprise, and keeps his own sanity at least in the general débâcle. The times are ripe for a good revival of this play. To the pleasure of understanding with Ulysses might be added the pleasure of watching a swift, complex action dramatically unrolled, for I do not in the least agree with those who think *Troilus and Cressida* unstageable. Therefore I should award the Players the palm for the season's most stimulating choice of a play.

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I must report however that the Players' production realized very few of the possibilities of the script. For instance, the atmosphere among the Greeks should be that of an encampment of idle soldiers, full of bullying, bawdy jokes, jealousies—all the little signs of demoralization that appear when men are cooped up together in idleness; but the Players did the Greeks in the pompous manner of our old-fashioned barn-storming tragedians. Or take Shakespeare's picture of Troy—full of forebodings, yet petty and lecherous; wailing Cassandra alternating with flighty Cressida; doomed Hector brought on after sly Uncle Pandarus. Some of these scenes have a tremendous build as they are written; but the actors, who were all stars, had no notion of playing together to give us the excitement of the scene. On the contrary, each star, as he entered, ignored the efforts of his predecessors, and, advancing slowly to center stage in the midst of a dead pause, proceeded to chant his soporific aria. If these long speeches had been well done, there might have been some excuse for the leisurely manner: we should not have had a play, but we might have had a series of tirades, like a Sunday afternoon concert at the Metropolitan. But the diction was so monotonous, the lines were so badly thought out, that what they gave the audience was a kind of generalized echo of Shakespearian tragedy—unintelligible, remote and pointless, and not *Troilus and Cressida* at all.

There were a few honourable exceptions. Mr. Otis Skinner's Thersites was a little disappointing. This character has some of the most forceful railing in Shakespeare. But Mr. Skinner (after the usual stellar pause, to notify the audience that *the* big actor is about to appear) comes tripping nimbly on like any Shakespearian fool. His idea seems to have been to be light and amusing, and he did not convey the hatred which is Thersites's life-blood. But he was intelligible; he gave us the lines at least, and for this one must be very grateful. But best of all were Mr. Eugene Powers as Pandarus and Miss Blanche Yurka as Helen. These actors understood the play, and instead of listening to their own voices, they gave us the characters. The only scene that came across as it should have was the one where Miss Yurka and Mr. Powers played together—the place in Act III where Helen and Pandarus indulge in some ambiguous spoofing on the subject of love. It gave one a taste of what the play might have been. But then these two actors have a way of being identified with the best in our current theatre: year after year they are to be found stubbornly bringing good things to life on Broadway, embarking on enterprises like *Electra*, or *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, or *The Inspector General*, or a series of Ibsen plays—which have nothing to recommend them but their intrinsic value as theatre. It is a great pleasure to see them play together; it makes one wish that someone with money and taste would give them, and a few others like them, a chance. We have a distressing way of shoving our best actors into the background to make way for the flabby flappers, male and female.

Retrospect

This is the time of year when play reviewers pause, look back over the season, and reconsider the important events. What is an important event in our theatre? Well, the theatre is important at all because, like politics and the depression, it exists. The theatre is what the many-headed monster sees when he looks in the mirror in his complacent, hopeful way. Also, our theatre contains its share of artists, people of talent, or force, or

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craftsmanship, who flounder about in the general confusion, making the best of poor material, insane working conditions, and a bewildered, diverse and apathetic public. Play reviewers try to be on the watch for them. The events that seem important are either the work of these few artists, and are good in themselves, or else they show which way the wind is blowing—what demos thinks of himself these days—what is to be hoped for—and what is no longer possible on Broadway.

Mr. Shaw and Mr. Banks

The Theatre Guild's production of *Too True to be Good* was significant in both these ways. Mr. Shaw, in his present rather disillusioned mood, found just the right collaborator in Mr. Leslie Banks, who got his play cast, designed and directed to bring out its prophetic mountebankery to perfection—"like Jeremiah on a trapeze", as Mr. Stark Young put it—and just at the moment, too, when Mr. Shaw was most brilliantly aware of himself. The Guild caught its erstwhile idol at a turning point, and there lies the second reason for the importance of the production, which was, for those who have ears to hear, the swan-song of the Shavian brisk, self-satisfied social satire.

The Group Theatre

The initial production of this new group, Mr. Paul Green's *The House of Connelly*, was important too. The intentions of the Group Theatre were important. After the demise of the Provincetown, the Neighbourhood and the Laboratory Theatres, and with the Guild about to make an alliance with the Shuberts, it was worth while to see whether a new repertory theatre was possible with us, and the Group tried to make this experiment. Taking a family play, in a nostalgic Chekovian vein, and a company of young people, they mixed the two for several months, and came out with an unusually unified production, a production full of echoes of the Moscow Art Theatre, and with many glints of poetry in it, mostly in Mr. Green's writing. The recipe was of course Russian. Perhaps this influence could at last take root with us and at last sprout a native movement. But the Group was less clear about its intentions, less *averti*, than the Neighbourhood; less native and folksy than the Provincetown, and lacking in the training in Russian methods which distinguished the Laboratory: unfortunately you cannot acquire that technique short of years of study. Their next two productions, *1931* and *Night Over Taos*, seemed hard to justify, though all the reviewers did what they could. Both plays were bad, even though by Americans, and they had been far less carefully produced than *The House of Connelly*. I hope they may do better, but the burden of proof is with them.

Mr. O'Neill, Madame Nazimova, and Mr. Jones

The Green and Shaw shows were important as movements in the theatre, but the work of Madame Nazimova and Mr. Jones in *Mourning Becomes Electra* is more typical of the season as a whole: two talented artists struggling with a stiff and pretentious monstrosity. The part of Christine is less like a case history than the other parts, but I think the chief reason it stood out so brilliantly was Madame Nazimova's work in it. She is temperamentally incapable of dealing in abstractions; when she is on the stage, she is alive, no matter what the author gives her to do. Besides, she was trained in Strindberg, Andreyev, and Ibsen himself, which is the center of the movement in drama from which

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Mr. O'Neill stems. Watching her play, I felt her completing out of her wide experience with the neurotic moderns what Mr. O'Neill had left as a pale sketch.

Mr. Jones rendered Mr. O'Neill a somewhat similar service in realizing the house and the atmosphere which Mr. O'Neill prescribed. There stood his setting, in its unrelieved gloom, keeping the neuroses in countenance, loyally insisting that Mr. O'Neill really meant it. This is Mr. Jones's special gift: a gift of sympathy, an ability to bring a playwright's notion farther than the playwright ever dreamed it could go. Remember what he did with *The Green Pastures*, and with the very different *Serena Blandish*. And to convince yourself of his virtuosity, consider his settings for Stravinsky's *Œdipus Rex*—also an attempt to modernize the Greeks, but as different from his work for O'Neill as that author is from Stravinsky. Well, we must hope for more Œdipuses and fewer Electras for Mr. Jones and for ourselves.

Mr. Kaufman

Mr. Kaufman's new show, *Of Thee I Sing* (Baby) got the Pulitzer Prize, and the first time, too, that this honour has been bestowed on a musical. That is cause enough for rejoicing; but the reason I celebrate Mr. Kaufman here is different. It is that he is working comfortably in the most lively, popular and remunerative department of the theatre—farce and musical comedy—and bringing it up slowly in the way it should go. Our better actors and designers and authors have a way of looking a little out of place on Broadway; as they mature, demos will have less and less of them, and they may be excused if they return the compliment. Even Mr. Jones, with all his professional loyalty to weak-kneed scripts, hardly holds the center of the picture. But Mr. Kaufman works with his feet on the ground: he is the author of a string of hits, which are hits first, and good plays second, if at all. So that when he sets out to crack the movies, or to remake musical comedy, he brings his audience with him. He knows what the traffic will bear, he advances slowly and ingratiatingly, and he surrounds himself with excellent collaborators. He has a long way to go before his work will be comparable with the best we know; but he is unmistakably on his way, and his unique importance lies here: if there is a growing point in our theatre, Mr. Kaufman is at the tip of it.

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ABOUT BOOK-COLLECTING

by Wilfred Partington

Swinburne, Dickens, and the Lovely Circus-Rider

London, May.

In the first End-Paper I wrote for this department, over a year ago, were given some new side-lights on Algernon Swinburne. I referred to the excellent opportunity he provides as a subject for collecting, and mentioned that even the rarer privately printed Swinburne items (in editions ranging from half a dozen to about fifty copies) were occasionally to be acquired. As corroborative evidence, I may note having recently seen, in a bookseller's catalogue, a copy of his *Dolorida* [P-P., 1883] at six dollars (par); and, subsequently, the sale at auction of John Drinkwater's collection of privately printed Swinburneana, that brought into circulation over sixty items.

The poem *Dolorida* is only an item of four pages. But what a curious tale is behind it—a tale in which the Divinity of Poets digresses, and Parnassus becomes pathetic. *Dolorida* is usually associated with Adah Menken; but, according to T. J. Wise's magnificent bibliography of Swinburne, it was originally written as part of the poet's unfinished, unpublished (and, apparently, unpublishable) autobiographical novel *Lesbia Brandon* (*c.* 1859). A few years later, Swinburne succumbed to the experienced charms of Adah Menken. She produced the inevitable album, and requested a contribution; and the poet, adapting the verse (written in French) to the momentary flame, duly inscribed it for her. The first verse of George Moore's original translation of *Dolorida* reads

> Darling, how long shall I be thine?
> She says, laying her lips to mine.
> Another night, another day,
> My love shall stay!

Adah Menken (née Adelaide McCord) was of Irish descent. She was the daughter of James McCord, a merchant of Chartrain (now Milneburg), near New Orleans, where she was born in 1835. Left an orphan at nine years of age—I quote Mr. Wise's biography—she, with one of her sisters, joined the ballet at the New Orleans Opera House as the Theodore Sisters. At seventeen she married her first husband. She became an actress, next a small newspaper proprietor, then a governess, and again an actress. In 1856 she married Alexander Isaac Menken, a Jew, whose religion she adopted, changing her Christian name to Adah. Her third husband was John C. Heenan, the pugilist; whom she

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married in 1859. In 1861 she contracted her fourth marriage, her husband this time being R. H. Newell ("Orpheus C. Kerr"). In 1864 she paid her first visit to England; where she played Mazeppa. In 1866 she returned to America, and made her fifth matrimonial adventure; her final husband being James Barclay. The much-married circus-rider again visited London to play Mazeppa, and became notorious. She died in Paris in 1868 at the age of thirty-three.

A PRIVATE PHOTOGRAPH

Swinburne was greatly infatuated with Adah Menken for a time; and other famous writers were also interested in her. There are many references to the affair in the poet's correspondence. To Purnell in 1867: "Tell her [Dolores] with my love that I would not show myself sick and disfigured in her eyes. I was spilt last week out of a hansom, and my nose and forehead cut to rags." To another correspondent in 1868: "I must send you . . . a photograph of my present possessor—known to Britannia as Miss Menken and to me as Dolores—and myself taken together. We both came out very well. Of course it's private. I've done nothing for an age". When she died: "It was a great shock to me and a real grief. I was ill for some days. She was most lovable, as a friend as well as a mistress". And again, referring to a report: "Complimentary to my appearance of youth at the time, if not to the discretion of my age. Dumas, of course, was dragged in for a share in the impertinence; and doubtless Dickens would have been if they had known of his kindness or civility to the poor thing".

The photograph referred to is almost embarrassingly ludicrous. Little Swinburne, in a nice black frock-coat posing like some prim evangelist, is standing looking down at the buxom Menken, who—one hand clasped in his, the other on his shoulder, gazes soulfully into his eyes. The Prince, in Conan Doyle's *A Scandal in Bohemia* confessed that he and a certain lady had had their photographs taken "together", upon which Sherlock Holmes replied gravely "that that was indeed an indiscretion".

AMERICA AND MENKEN

Adah Menken's performance as Mazeppa was one of the sensations of the early sixties. *Lord Byron's Grand Historical Drama of Mazeppa*—which, in actual fact, owed nothing to Byron except its title, was a cross between a melodrama and a circus-turn. Its rôle "of the daring and chivalric Tartar Prince" was at first taken by a man. But Adah made such a success of the part in San Francisco that she went on tour, and performed it in Berlin and London. Even before her appearance there were protests against "the naked drama"; but the actress, in the press, defended her costume as "not in the least indelicate"—and, in truth, it was modesty itself compared with some of our present-day revues.

She was a great success in England, to the delight of the New York newspapers. "The Menken", said one, "waxeth fat in the land of Dukes and Duchesses; yea, she even basketh in the sunshine of Royalty . . . the immense auditorium being nightly filled with old and young, their Royal nibs, and those of less degree". Her beauty was said to be of the "Lola Montez-Byronic variety"; and Charles Webb, the New York dramatic critic, wrote of her ecstatically: "Symmetrical in every limb as one of Praxiteles's marbles, lithe and supple in movement as the panther when he swings himself from tree to tree in the forest; every muscle obedient to the inspiration of her will; throwing into

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each motion the wonderful poetry which burns in her soul".

The English critics praised her beauty with equal zest; "but", says one, "for the drama, the piece, the spectacle, the entertainment, the jumble, the hotch-potch, or whatever it may be called as a whole, we can neither admire it nor understand it".

What lads they were in the eighteen-sixties!

STRAY LEAVES AND THE REST

In addition to *Dolorida,* as described above (of which there are later reprints), there are other items which come into the collecting interest of the Menken affair, the chief being *Adah Isaac Menken, A Fragment of Autobiography,* by Swinburne (privately-printed by Clement Shorter, in 1917, in an edition of twelve copies); and *Infelicia,* Adah's own tiny volume of her verse, published by Hotten in 1868, with the proofs of which Swinburne assisted.

These notes illustrate the point I previously made, that the poet's wide range of work offers all the fun of the chase for the collector—and, at present, at reasonable enough prices. But the Adoration of Adah and its literature only represents, after all, a few wayward leaves in that remarkable achievement —Swinburne's poetry and prose, the beauty and importance of much of which is still not fully acknowledged.

TEN CONTEMPORARIES

Under the not very suitable—and not very accurate—title of *Ten Contemporaries: Notes towards their Definitive Bibliography* (Benn Bros., London. $1.50) Mr. John Gawsworth has compiled a most useful book, which is likely to be of service for many a year. Actually, the book is a collection of bibliographies of ten contemporary authors—Lascelles Abercrombie, Rhys Davies, George Egerton, Wilfrid Gibson, Stephen Hudson, Robert Nichols, Herbert E. Palmer, Sir Ronald Ross, M. P. Shiel, and Edith Sitwell. The bibliographies are embellished, and in some cases made more informative, by the addition of a foreword by Viscount Esher and original essays by each of the ten contemporaries.

I cannot suppose that there is, at present, intense collecting interest in every one of these ten authors (although I am assured that the "Firsts" of M. P. Shiel "are a rage in America"), or that they are all of equal importance. The point is that here are authors who have been inspired to achieve considerable volumes of work: and here is set forth the guide to their labours, so that they who read may run to consult. The technical value of bibliographies can only be proved by use and experience. Mr. Gawsworth has set about his task with a view to thorough accomplishment; and his book carries its own recommendation to all institutions and bookmen wisely aspiring to a reference department in their own libraries.

A FEW WORDS WITH A POET

One of the Ten Contemporaries, Mr. Wilfrid Gibson, with nose in the air, begins his essay—"With regard to this business of bibliography"; and proceeds to pontificate thus: "Yet, even if one fails to comprehend the fascination of the game, it would be taking oneself altogether too seriously to make any solemn protest against so harmless and bloodless a sport, more especially as it would seem to be a strict rule of the pastime that the collector should never on any account read any of the volumes in his collection. I, at all events, feel that I can safely stand aside and chuckle, secure in the knowledge that the collector can have but a temporary success, for time is on my side—time that will inevitably

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and mercifully crumble to grey dust the shoddy material which the modern paper-maker produces."

I am tired of hearing this parrot-like gibe that it is the rule for collectors never to read their books—a lie, ungenerous and ridiculous, that I shall not cease to denounce; although I need not waste valuable time and space in exposing it. Mr. Gibson assures us that Time is on his side. Possibly—and possibly he has the Lord of Creation in his pocket. But this does not explain Mr. Gibson's curious outburst; which is also ill-mannered, considering where it appears. If his allegation does not arise from ignorance, it looks as though he were posing—and it is not a very poetical or a graceful pose. If, on the other hand, the allegation does arise from ignorance, then Mr. Gibson is to be pitied, and commiserated with in spending time on an essay that might have been better devoted to those books he "still hopes to write" and which he cannot help regarding "as potential masterpieces".

I will spare Mr. Gibson, and not detail a list of great poets who were also book-collectors. Time is also on their side.

ARNOLD BENNETT AND THE THEATRE

Although, owing to the economic conditions, there is a temporary reaction in the antiquarian book-trade, in England there is no lack of enterprise among the booksellers; and there are plenty of collectors seizing the opportunities of the times. In London several new bookshops have been opened; and there are still more instances of antiquarian booksellers launching out strongly with catalogues.

An interesting example is that of Messrs. Poynder Hunt and Company (of 4 Broad Street, Reading, England) who announce a series of catalogues devoted to over a dozen fields of collecting, including Art, Orientalia, Travel, Sport, Fiction, and English Literature. Three of the catalogues have already been issued: Numbers 96, Theology; 97, History and Economics; and 98 English Literature, 1586-1930. It may be an indication of policy that these catalogues are economically produced; and, as if to compensate for elaborate printing and production, the prices of the items detailed generally are equally

MR PUNCH.

modest. A bargain is a bargain, however it reaches the book-lover; and he is duly grateful. Anyhow, attention is specially drawn by the cataloguer to the fact that many items figure at less than half-a-dollar each. Catalogue 98 is notable for eight pages of books by Arnold Bennett, nearly all first editions. There is no bibliography of this author that I know; and Messrs. Poynder Hunt and Company's annotated selection is worth the close attention of specialists for several reasons.

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Three items may be mentioned: *The Honeymoon* (1st edn. 1911) $4.00, and *Liberty* (1st. 1914) $2.50—both fine copies and autographed by the author; and *Tales of the Five Towns* (1st. 1905), $10.00. This catalogue begins with Addison and Lord Bacon, and ends with H. G. Wells. It is a long and fascinating journey between.

Mr. J. Kyrle Fletcher (The Bridge, Newport Mon, England) sends out a neat *Catalogue of Plays, Players, and Puppets,* with a stage-curtain device in gold on the front cover. As a frontispiece, there is Cruikshank's clever etching of Mr. Punch, which is reproduced here by courtesy of Mr. Kyrle Fletcher. The theatre provides interesting scope for collectors, whether of the boxes or of the pit. This catalogue, like the good actor, appeals to all parts of the house.

Books and MSS. in the Sale-Rooms

Nimrod's "Music" Bargain—A curious Incident—Book that first described Tobacco —Carlyle's Folks listen to the Learned Babble—Worried Wesley

The feature of recent sales has been the unexpected appearance of a number of unusually interesting books and manuscripts; and a rather increased activity on the part of American purchasers, who are wisely taking the chances of the moment.

It is always pleasant to hear of collecting bargains. The latest to be recorded is that of a bookman who, in an English bookshop, bought a bundle of papers labelled "Music" for a dollar or two. The papers proved to be letters and manuscripts, mostly unpublished, of Charles James Apperley, the "mighty Nimrod" of sporting literature. That they should have been so labelled is amusing, for probably the only "music" known to Apperley was that of the huntsman's horn, the merry clink of convivial glasses, and the old hunting-songs. The bundle comprized 557 letters from "Nimrod" to the editor of the *Sporting Magazine;* letters to him from kindred spirits like Jack Russell, the sporting parson, and R. S. Surtees, without whose novels of the Field no library of sport is complete; and a number of MSS and other documents. The papers sold for $1,000 at Hodgsons, as compared with their "gift" price as "Music".

* * *

A find such as this always leads to the recollection of other instances of collecting-fortune. One of these tells of a man who bought a copy of the first edition of Benjamin Franklin's *Liberty and Necessity* for half-a-dollar. The copy was offered to the British Museum at a guinea, and declined—only to realize, in after years, no less than $5,000. But then, once keen and experienced in collecting, and bargains come as a matter of course—whether you are in America or England.

* * *

There was a curious incident at Christie's. The chief lot in one of the day's sales was a copy of Thomas Harriot's *Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* . . . (1590)—an item which is naturally a great desideratum in America, and of which (belonging to this edition) there are only about a dozen copies known to exist. The firm of American agents in London, who secured the book, could have had it for their last bid of $1,500; but as they came to the auction room with two larger commissions, they had to amend this final bid to $2,000—which presumably gave the prize to the higher of the two rivals.

(*Continued on page ix*)

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THE NEW BOOKS

AMERICA AS AMERICANS SEE IT *edited by Fred J. Ringel* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $3.75)

"FORTY-SIX celebrated writers, one-hundred well-known artists present the real America in an absorbing panoramic volume", reads the jacket. With a few qualifications that statement can stand as read. After all, when an editor calls on such numbers they can't all be wrong, and there has been usually a happy choice of subject and corresponding author. To name a few: Stuart Chase on American Industry, R. E. Sherwood on Hollywood, John Tunis on Sports, Du Bois and James Weldon Johnson on the Negro, Upton Sinclair on Graft, O. O. McIntyre on New York, Graham McNamee on Radio Thrills, and Jim Tully on Hoboes. As for the artists, practically everyone has been included, and theirs has been the advantage of not having had to produce a small but representative bit for the occasion. Although crowded into small reproductions in black-and-white, the paintings and drawings carry off the day both in numbers and in interest. They show a greater variety, are more pointed and complete, and have nothing of the perfunctory, which is a criticism that might be levelled at many of the articles.

This book was assembled by a German for publication in Germany and other European countries. Its purpose, as stated in the editor's admirable foreword, was to make clear "the exaggerations and deficiencies" of the familiar European indictments of the United States. Needless to say, the authors included in this book are not of the type given to blinking at or white-washing American frailties. Among them are many who were the first to point the finger of scorn at specific abuses and stupidities. It was a long time ago that Anderson, Du Bois and Sinclair started complaining. On the other hand, the book is by no means a chorus of disapproval. The effort of the editor to find unbiased, expert opinion has resulted in articles which strike a nice balance between highly individualized opinion and general fact.

It should be noted that the value of the text for the American reader varies in inverse proportion to the number of authors with whose work he is familiar. The articles average about twenty-five hundred words, and within such limits it is hardly to be expected that the authors could do more than present brief summaries of the fields upon which they have spent years and written books. Omitting the great spaces of politics, religion, and prohibition, this book nevertheless will provide a great deal of information for ninety-nine out of one hundred Americans if, flouting Mr. Fadiman's observation, they can be persuaded to buy a book instead of reading a newspaper, listening to the radio or a talkie, eating a piece of candy, or taking a soft-drink.

Europeans can from this full source strengthen whatever feeling they already possess for America, either of disgust or admiration. But at least their information will be reasonably correct. They are still allowed to believe in gangsters "who prime themselves with cocaine and kill the defenceless with machine guns from swiftly racing motor

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cars" (O. O. McIntyre of New York), or in those other gangsters "who use their weapons chiefly upon each other", described by an anonymous writer speaking of Chicago. "Furthermore," adds this latter writer, "it is to these same criminals that the citizen is indebted for his quiet glass of beer, his cocktail, or his whiskey when he is in a mood for revelry." They can hear Mr. Pitkin say, "The home without electric light and gas is a freak, save in the remoter country districts". Or they can consider the rude frontier life in America with Doris Fleischman, who states that of 10,000 farmhouses 79% have no electricity and 68% no running water. Yes, America is not wholly standardized yet, not even the authorities, and Mr. Ringel's big book proves it in the fairest way of all, out of our own mouths.

ARCHER WINSTEN

ANATOLE FRANCE: THE MIND AND THE MAN *by Lewis Piaget Shanks* (HARPERS. $2.50)

ONLY in the sense of popular reading will it be an adverse criticism of this book to say that it deals more with the mind than the man. The painstaking analysis of the mind of a literary man can hardly be said to make exciting material. It is even less so in this instance for the good reason that M. France was himself occupied during his long career with the complete and artful exposition of his very lucid mind. Mr. Shanks returns in numerous quotations to what M. France said of certain characters he had created. He was actually speaking about himself, for his most important creations were accurate projections of himself. The book, therefore, should not be attempted by those who are not familiar with France's works; for those who are familiar, it may not add a great deal.

The life of Anatole France is indicated in rather broad outlines, not re-created. As a boy in school he was slothful and dreamy. He fell in love with an actress older than he was, and his distant adoration carried him into the realm of the actress's parts, Racine, Corneille, the Greek tragedians, and Shakespeare. Later, timid and obsequious, the son of a second-hand bookseller, he lived at home, writing poetry and some criticism, and thereby strengthening his sense of form and artistry. At that time he was under the influence of Taine and the realists. Afterwards he came under the influences of Renan and Montaigne and developed an antipathy to Zola natural in "a renegade of Naturalism who hated what he had once admired". When he was thirty-two he first began to support himself; at thirty-three he married the woman his mother chose for him. Fourteen years later he got a divorce and, with the urging of Madame de Caillavet, his "Egeria", "finally stepped into the arena" of life, aged forty-seven.

Mr. Shanks traces the dominance of Madame de Caillavet. She took notes on his conversation, got him material to work with, took him about with her, polished his manners, was helpful in having him elected to the Academy, and awakened him when he dozed over his work after meals. She was responsible for the unprecedented productivity of the master from 1887 until 1909 when she died. He joined with Zola in the defense of Dreyfus, and somewhat later became an active radical. For a brief period after the war he believed in Russian communism. But in the end he "completed the circle of his beliefs, returning to the pessimism of Taine".

Mr. Shanks asks what was the stable element in Anatole France. "Was it the poet or the Naturalistic novelist, the dilettante or the patient historian, the mystic or the rabid

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anticlerical, the amiable sceptic or the bitter polemic, the cynical satirist or the reformer, the scoffer at men or the humanitarian and builder of a new Utopia?" He answers that France is all of these plus two basic elements: "an imagination essentially romantic and a Voltairian keenness of analysis". France never forgot the "Cult of Beauty". He built "in the cool yet glowing marbles of the Greeks". Admitting the charge against his subject, Mr. Shanks says that although "the cult of the self will probably perish", such art will endure for its grace and beauty alone. The taste of the future in grace and beauty can alone settle the problem of endurance.

ARCHER WINSTEN

THIRTY YEARS IN THE GOLDEN NORTH *by Jan Welzl, translated by Paul Selver with a foreword by Karel Capek* (MACMILLAN. $2.50)

IT IS sweet, Lucretius remarked, to sit by a cozy fire and to hear a gale roaring outside and to think of sailors in desperate extremities on a storm-tossed sea. The narrative of Jan Welzl, the Czech trader, should certainly tend to encourage the votaries of this rather sadistic amusement. What are storm-tossed sailors compared to Eskimos driven insane by the crackling of Polar ice, or Arctic settlers purposely developing scurvy in order that their aching teeth may drop out, or young girls ravished by immediate relatives at the age of six or seven years, or "blind tigers" summarily roasted to a crisp by the Mabel Willebrandts of the North, or infants cut in small pieces and distributed over the frost-bitten surfaces of their unduly tenacious elders, who were thereupon laughed off the stage on account of their "mottled appearance" and because "on top of all that their mouths were crooked"!

Readers of a less savage humour may chuckle sardonically at the spectacle of our author in the midst of all these disconcerting oddities, imperturbably applying the simple practical philosophy of a hero of Daniel Defoe, acquiring the esteem and trust of his Arctic neighbours, and laying up for himself treasures on earth in such a fashion, if possible, that frost and thaw may not corrupt or Polar bears break in and steal. After more than a year spent in almost complete isolation in New Siberia, Welzl happened upon a neighbour. "His quarters were most comfortably arranged, and compared to him I was very badly off. I felt a little ashamed, and I at once made up my mind that, as soon as possible, I would arrange my cave in a similar style, because *I was not going to be one of the nobodies on the island.*" He was so far faithful to this laudable instinct that he was ultimately chosen chief and supreme judge of New Siberia. "As such, I might have let the worst ruffians escape and done all sorts of mischief if I had been a scoundrel. But I never did that; in the first place I was never sure whether anybody might not give the game away, and then I never dreamed of doing anything so wicked."

Welzl says with regard to the first whale that he saw killed: "I stood on the deck, startled, surprised and sad. I said to myself: 'What a large animal, and to think that it had to come to such a wretched end!'" Did he really say that to himself, or what did he say? A mystery, for many readers, more baffling and more engaging than any that is hidden by Arctic snows? And why did he go to the North? And why did he stay? And what did he really think about anything, this strange character whom nature or consummate art has made the epitome of our unselfconscious humanity?

ROBERTS TAPLEY

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CHINA *by Marc Chadourne* (COVICI-FRIEDE. $3.00)

FROM the standpoint of the lay reader, books about China have commonly suffered from the fact that they discussed the unknown in terms of the unknown. They are apt to be full of baffling proper names and references to obscure philosophies and to vanished eons of dynastic preponderance. Marc Chadourne has brought to his task of interpreting modern China the invaluable gift—which, even in a novelist, one may sometimes desire in vain—of making his points concretely. His descriptions of the three ineffable Messrs. Sen, for example, rival similar descriptions in a volume that appeared some six or seven years ago (*On a Chinese Screen*) by the gifted Mr. Somerset Maugham. Possibly M. Chadourne's effects owe a part of their sharpness and clarity to the fact that the author, instead of attempting to dissolve away into the local scenery and steep himself to the eyebrows in foreign atmosphere, has permitted himself a degree of humorous detachment. I can recommend especially, to a public recently and rightly exercised on this subject, his account of first-, second-, and third-class kidnappings in China.

M. Chadourne's conclusions will be a surprise to a great many readers. He reposes great confidence, as a means of defense, in Chinese inertia and the slow but certain digestive process by which she has hitherto assimilated invading hordes and subjected them to the laws of her own metabolism. What are wars and revolutions to a country in which every kind of cataclysm is the rule and not the exception? The Chinese and the Japanese are as different as the geography of their two nations. "Smile at a Celestial and he swoons; speak to a Japanese and he strangles." The Japanese behaviour, M. Chadourne makes plain, is much more like the Occidental.

The translator of *China*, Mr. Harry Block, has done wonders with an original text that must have taxed both patience and ingenuity and that surely required at some points a creative effort; and Miguel Covarubbias, whose impressions of Bali are already familiar to a certain public, has contributed profuse illustrations in his broad, yet severe and somehow magical style.

ROBERTS TAPLEY

MOZART *by Marcia Davenport* (SCRIBNER'S. $3.50)

TODAY'S biographies are like crack railroad trains or week-end parties. One is swirled into a fast panorama of people, flying country, minds, hearts, achievements, prejudices, and gossip. Imagination cries out for just one break in the relentless speed. No one can hear well for the whistling wind.

Mozart is such a book. Nothing is lacking which fact or skilful imagination can supply. The drama of Amadeus Wolfgang Mozart's struggle for recognition and patronage in eighteenth-century Europe and the thing in him which made the attainment of them impossible is the scope of Mrs. Davenport's work.

From the moment that the baby's hands, "not strong enough to butter their own bread", were firm and unfaltering at the clavier, Leopold Mozart accepted the trust of his son's genius. The father, *Kapellmeister* at the court of the Archbishop of Salzburg, was a painstaking and pedantic musician. In teaching his son, he brought forward every available kind of music, and insisted on a thorough training in counterpoint. Wolfgang never had to hear a precept twice. "It was like bringing to his attention something

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he already knew." But of the ABC of child-rearing as our white-tiled civilization sees it Leopold knew nothing, and would have cared less. He was a showman, determined to reap benefits from the exhibition of the prodigy and his creditable sister, four years older. Thus began the long peregrinations across Europe, with stops at all the petty courts, triumphs in Paris and London, and months of concentrated study between.

The book constantly reminds us of the social position of musicians. When Wolfgang later accompanied the Archbishop on a visit of state, he ate at the table of the valet and cooks—below the valet! Small wonder that he clung to the Webers, poor musicians of his own class in Vienna, although it broke his father's heart and made a final breach between them.

The story of the magic of Mozart's composition and his failure to succeed at the court of Franz Josef, because the rage of the moment was for Italian music, is well told. Marcia Davenport is admirably fitted for her task. Not only has she followed the Mozart trail all over Europe, but she is the daughter of Alma Gluck, a very great singer of Mozart arias. This fact may have influenced her attitude. She makes Mozart's interest in opera the pivot of his career. To her the instrumental music seems of little value by comparison. The soundness of using Mozart's operas as one's unit of measurement for his success as a musician is at least debatable. He wrote a great deal for his friends, songs for Aloysia Weber, quartettes for Haydn, even works for the bassoon and the oboe, although he loathed these instruments. In opera lay the way to fame and recognition—which might easily account for his passionate activity with the opera when he had a chance. But there would be no *Marriage of Figaro* without the overture.

It is unfortunate that there is no listing of the composer's works appended with page references. Because Mrs. Davenport weaves Mozart's music so thoroughly into his life and emotions, this seems necessary.

HELEN EVERITT

AMERICA IN THE PACIFIC *by Foster Rhea Dulles* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $3.50)

MR. DULLES expresses the opinion, in his Introduction, that the issue recently raised by Japan in Manchuria and at Shanghai was "a direct challenge" to American policy in the Far East, and that Secretary Stimson, in declaring that the United States could not recognize the legality of any arrangement, whether of fact or treaty, between Japan and China which impaired American treaty rights in China or menaced the open door, "could not have acted otherwise" because of the Washington Conference and "the long record of American expansion in the Pacific". It is natural, after this, to expect a discussion primarily concerned with American policy generally in the Pacific area, and more particularly its relation to the present Sino-Japanese controversy. Mr. Dulles, however, makes only incidental allusions to this subject, and instead writes a sketchy account of how the United States acquired Oregon and California, how Commodore Perry opened Japan, and how the American flag came to wave over Samoa, Hawaii, and the Philippines. The narrative is well enough handled, although it contains nothing new; but when, having finished it, Mr. Dulles recurs to policy and writes that "we stand committed to a new division of power in the Pacific based upon a twentieth-century program of international cooperation", it is open to a critic to ask precisely what he means.

WILLIAM MACDONALD

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THAT STRANGE LITTLE BROWN MAN GANDHI *by Frederick B. Fisher* (LONG & SMITH. $2.50)

THE author of this appealing book is a Methodist bishop who has spent many years in India, knows Gandhi well, and has a profound admiration for Gandhi's character and for the movement for national liberation. Gandhi is pictured as neither a visionary nor a fanatic, but a combination of idealist and practical statesman who knows both the East and the West, thoroughly understands the Indian mind, and presses his campaign of boycott and civil disobedience as vigorously and comprehensively as other commanders press their campaigns at arms. His asceticism, his loin-cloth, and his spinning-wheel are alike protests and symbols: protests against the luxuries which British domination imposes upon a people heavily bled for English profit, and practical embodiments of simple living and self-help. Hand-spinning, in particular, serves the double purpose of a useful occupation for women, whose social emancipation is one of the extraordinary accompaniments of the Gandhi movement, and for all persons during the four or five months of the year when the heat stops work in the fields, and as a supreme bond of coöperation.

What Bishop Fisher has to say accordingly has mainly to do with Gandhi's social philosophy and religious views, his theory of non-violence, his systematic repudiation of the restrictions of caste, and his leadership of the organized revolt against British domination. The book is not, in the ordinary sense, a biography of Gandhi nor a history of the Nationalist movement, although it contains information about both. There is, however, an interesting chapter on Gandhi's early experiences in South Africa, where he saw and felt the weight of colour discrimination and the evils of forced coolie labour in the mines; another on Gandhi's wife, a fine character whom most writers have passed over; and another on the Indian attitude toward sex. Incidentally, the book is a forcible indictment of British rule in India from almost every point, and a revelation of the restrictions which are imposed upon foreigners, especially Americans, and of the strict censorship of news and private correspondence by cable. Not many American readers probably will agree with Bishop Fisher that India is already fit for self-government, but his lively pages cannot be read without realizing the depth and sweep of the intellectual, social, and political revolution whose spirit and methods he sympathetically describes.

WILLIAM MACDONALD

RUSSIA'S DECISIVE YEAR *by Ellery Walter* (PUTNAM. $3.00)

MR. WALTER went to Russia armed with a letter of general introduction from Senator Borah and credentials as a special correspondent of the New York *Herald Tribune*. Supplementing these with an order from the Supreme Economic Council, he travelled some 15,000 miles in an itinerary that included Siberia, the Ukraine, and Georgia, visited a number of the chief industrial and agricultural centers, and kept his eyes and ears, and especially his nose, open for whatever impressions they might receive. His sympathies at first were with communism, and his primary object was to study the workings of the Five Year plan in its third or "decisive" year. His lively and readable narrative suggests that he had a very good time, but his conclusions were almost wholly unfavourable. The trip brought him "three tremendous disillusionments": first, that the truth about Russia could not be sent out of

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the country nor the truth about the outside world told in Russia; second, that the government had tricked the peasants and the peasants were unhappy; and third, that the Russian leaders, instead of being altruists, were much concerned for their own comfort and as a class were snobs striving "ruthlessly for power". Not only had the first Five Year plan failed, but fear of making mistakes, lack of skilled labour, standard equipment, et cetera, and "subtle sabotage" due to the passive resistance of the masses would defeat any large industrial plan. Food of course was scanty and bad, hotels dirty and crowded, train service ludicrously inefficient, sanitation dreadful, the far-famed public nurseries filthy, and the lot of the average worker or peasant almost intolerably hard. The general gloom of Mr. Walter's findings is relieved by some good pieces of description and by an entertaining account of the Shaw-Astor visit, with Lady Astor grumbling that Shaw should be kept waiting by officials and Shaw imagining that he was really seeing Russia.

WILLIAM MACDONALD

DEVELOPMENT OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS IDEA *by Theodore Marburg, edited by John H. Latané* (MACMILLAN. TWO VOLS. $8.00)

THE documents here collected relate to the history of the League to Enforce Peace, a society formed in June, 1915, with ex-President Taft as its titular head, to propagate the idea of a league of nations to provide for the judicial settlement of such international disputes as were in their nature justiciable, and by the imposition of economic and military sanctions enforce peace. Principally through the efforts of Theodore Marburg, former American Minister to Belgium, an international propaganda for the idea was carried on; American and European jurists, publicists, journalists, and men of affairs, prominent among them Lord Bryce, gave their support to the undertaking, and the high watermark was reached in May, 1916, when President Wilson, whose sympathy had been persistently sought, addressed the League at its meeting at Washington.

The papers are an important contribution to the history of the World War, and throw a good deal of light upon the propagandist group whose main ideas later took form, in the hands of Wilson, in the Covenant of the League of Nations. Wilson, however, appears to have been long averse to the idea of enforcing peace, and in his Washington speech carefully avoided the phrase. It would be interesting to know how far his hesitation was due to the pressure which was put upon him to depart from his policy of neutrality, and how far to his realization that in France, and to some extent in England, the Marburg project was looked upon as a movement intended to end the war without victory for the Allies. Even in this country some of the leading friends of the League to Enforce Peace objected strongly to doing anything that might delay or prevent the defeat of Germany. Unfortunately Professor Latané, who died before this work appeared in print, did not multiply his notes to the documents sufficiently to enable the reader to follow easily the political ramifications of the League's operations. The gap in Wilson's intellectual development between his cautious utterances at the Washington meeting and his elevation of the League Covenant to first place in his program of a peace settlement might be bridged by comparing the present documents with such a work as *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, who is not represented in the Marburg collection.

WILLIAM MACDONALD

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THE ANATOMY OF ART *by Herbert Read* (DODD, MEAD. $3.50)

A HUNDRED sections, which he modestly calls notes, suffice for Mr. Read's clear and pungent interpretation of the meaning of art. Any studious aesthetician, rooting among the problems of art and aesthetics, will have to consider the meanings of art in order to know its meaning. Although one could pigeon-hole Mr. Read with the moderate Croceans as a believer in intuition, he does not release the defining tag at once. First we follow him through definitions in which useful distinctions are made between ugliness, the opposite of the Greeks' moral goodness; art, "the desire to please"; and beauty, "the unity of formal relations among our sense perceptions". We, as spectators of art, learn that very few art objects are geometrically or abstractly perfect: the most lovely pottery is irregular; even the Greeks distorted parts of the anatomy in their sculpture.

But Mr. Read also feels that art is connected with religion; that when each is linked to each, we then have great art. Mr. Read's sense of glory, as we saw in his book of that name, is strong. When he can convince us, as he does in writing of Van Gogh, that the artist gifted with a religious sensibility may rise above the limitations of his period, he is at his best.

Finally, as Mr. Read ponders art from the point of view of the artist, he tells us that "the real function of art is to express feeling and transmit understanding". He deplores (with sufficient reason) the realistic art of Frith's Derby Day and compares it (with insufficient reasons) to *The Pickwick Papers*, for he thinks these two products are easily understood by all types of intelligence, by Everyman. In other words, Mr. Read does not agree with Tolstoy that the feelings of the artist should be transmitted. The artist, he thinks, should express himself and rely upon kindred souls to read his message aright. The kindred soul will find that the artist, by inducing "a state of wonder or admiration", has purged our emotions and our problems for us.

This sense of the whole, (*une harmonie d'ensemble*, as expressed by Matisse, an understanding painter whom Mr. Read interestingly measures with Tolstoy) is very Aristotelian and really brings us back to Croce. It is the sort of pleasure art has always given, from the drawings of animals by African Bushmen to the drawings and paintings of metaphysical states by Paul Klee. The human spirit, being omnivorous, finds its food everywhere, even though it sometimes does not know its own ultimate good. Wherever this spirit burgeons into art, representing any ideal you please, Mr. Read is in attendance —which is what makes him so sympathetic to highly imaginative artists, to Lewis Carroll, Henri Rousseau, Chagall, and Henry Moore, to the rococo, the baroque, and Venetian glass.

JAMES W. LANE

ART AND BEAUTY *by Max Schoen* (MACMILLAN. $2.00)

THE moral which books on aesthetics unconsciously point is that art is infinite. They sometimes also indicate that their learned discourses are the last word in aridity. Since art, however, *is* infinite, I would rather pick at one or two things Mr. Schoen says than retail his catalogue-like argument. He says, for instance, that "an art work is the expression of a unique experience by a unique mind, the expression resulting in a product which is a perfect record of the experience". I believe he should have written "unique

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record", for of course not every art work is perfect. We have to have a waste basket and ashcans for the poor art of this world, experiences unique but not perfectly, even if uniquely, recorded.

For the rest Mr. Schoen points out how similar the various theories of beauty are, such as intrinsicality, disinterestedness, Bell's significant form, Santayana's objectification, Croce's intuition, Lipps's empathy, Puffer's aesthetic repose, and Aristotle's catharsis. This will probably check with conclusions the reader may himself have formed from reading Croce's *Aesthetic*, where too minute a study of all the theories lead him to pull his hair. Mr. Schoen gets the reader on the broad highway of Pater, and painting is shown to be musical in "the beauty of the structure of line and color". This we can feel in the gesturing and play of well-drawn figures in Italian art, say, the graceful and rhythmic painting of Tintoretto, Beccafumi, or Correggio. But let writers on aesthetics beware. Beauty, Miss Wylie sang,

> . . . is neither good nor bad
> But innocent and wild!
> Enshrine her and she dies, who had
> The hard heart of a child.

JAMES W. LANE

OWEN D. YOUNG, A NEW TYPE OF INDUSTRIAL LEADER *by Ida M. Tarbell* (MACMILLAN. $3.00)

MISS TARBELL proves the merit of being a good boy in this biography of the Chairman of the Board of the General Electric Company. Fortune began patting Mr. Young on the head from the day the Reverend Dr. Alpheus Baker Hervey, president of St. Lawrence University at Canton, New York, hunting for candidates to fill sundry vacant free scholarships in that worthy institution, found him up in the North Woods near Van Hornesville and lighted him on his way toward the top. Indeed Fortune's kindly hand seems never to have been lifted. He had been a good boy at home and in the local school and continued the record at St. Lawrence. Thence he went to the Boston Law School without damaging his record for rectitude. He studied hard, working in a law office at the same time, pausing to wed Miss Josephine Edmonds, but not delaying his progress. A term in the law office brought him into contact with Stone and Webster, specialists in industrial organizing, and on to relations with Charles A. Coffin, head of the General Electric Company, then a somewhat modest monster, with headquarters at Lynn. Coffin was compelled by the aftermath of the troubles of 1896 to seek succour and found it at the hands of J. Pierpont Morgan, the elder. The rest is prosperity and profit. Mr. Coffin took Mr. Young into his legal department. To be connected with a Morgan enterprise was to have a key to the front door. This Mr. Young has never lost. Just how it makes him "a new type of industrial leader" Miss Tarbell fails to show.

General Electric grew and grew and grew after the manner of great American enterprises and Mr. Young became its president. The regard of the elder Morgan was taken over by his son and successor in the powerhouse at the corner of Wall and Broad. When the "Dawes plan" for lugging Europe's financial deficiencies developed a weakness in the spine it became necessary to doctor it. Nothing international in the banking line can be managed without the house of Morgan, hence when the tinkering began, a conference at Mr. Morgan's Madison Avenue residence developed his scheme, which was masked as the "Young plan". It met with great acclaim as Mr. Young spread it abroad,

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but its knees have grown too weak to carry the load. But, it sufficed to put the good boy in the limelight on both sides of the sea, leaving Mr. Morgan modestly behind. Failures are not his specialty.

Some faint glimpses are given of the inception of the Radio Corporation of America. "Mr. Young", it appears, "feared that any political interference at this juncture might cause confusion." This was tactful, and preceded the calm gathering-in by varying methods of the numerous patents that went with an art "so new". By his intelligent action what ought to have been a government institution as in England and Germany, is now a miscellany subsisting on tooth paste, largely intermingled with sounds of horror tuned to tickle the morons. This piece of perspicacity does not reveal Mr. Young as "a new type of industrial leader", but rather as one of the good old sort. For further proof, note the stock market record of this "industry".

One gathers from the chapter headed *Industrial Leader* that the leadership consists more in saying what might be done than in doing it. In a practical sense he has proceeded like the rest of the industrialists who are now floundering in the midst of the wreckage they have caused. "I think I can now say with conviction", concludes Miss Tarbell, "that Mr. Young is one of the best organized men in the world." To this there need be no dissent.

DON C. SEITZ

THESE ACRES *by Frances Frost* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $2.00)

THE subject matter of all the poems which make up Frances Frost's latest volume *These Acres* is rooted in the mountainous and rocky landscape of New England. From this landscape they derive their passionate austerity and emotional depth.

It is, perhaps, ungrateful to quarrel with poetry because of what it does not say, but the steady reiteration of the same emotional expression becomes monotonous and so loses its effectiveness. Miss Frost is deeply moved by the simplicity and austerity of nature but her mood has no variations.

Beside a lack of emotional versatility in *These Acres* there is a technical impediment which flaws most of the poems. Too often the thought is tortured, straining for an expression beyond its grasp. Many of the poems flap heavily along the ground, unable to lift themselves in sustained flight. In the few cases where Frances Frost attempts less she goes farther. The really successful poems in the book are those like *Sunlight* and *To Losers* where the thought is simple and direct. The most ambitious attempts, like the nine-page *Testament of Truth,* becomes inextricably tangled and lose themselves in indirection and confusion.

LOUIS J. HALLE, JR.

LORD JUGGLER AND OTHER POEMS *by Roberta Teale Swartz* (HARPER. $2.00)

AMID the unending flow of little poems and little verses which currently masquerade as poetry it is a real delight to come across the authentic article. With one exception the forty-eight poems which compose *Lord Juggler* are short and not unconventional lyrics, but they are invested with a grace and mystery which transcends the narrow boundaries of the mere verses and builds up an integrated and individual view of life. Each lyric expresses part of a larger whole so that no matter how small its immediate scope it remains dynamic, developing around its nucleus a universe.

It is difficult to express the quality of Roberta Swartz's thought. She is filled with

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the foreboding of death which haunts A. E. Housman, but unlike him she is not resigned to it, nor does she give herself up to bitterness. Life for her is a tight-rope stretched over the brink of death, but what it loses in permanence it makes up in intensity. She is constantly torn between the hope of immortality and fear of death ("They say Elijah stood so brave He was exempted from the grave"). Her joy of life is haunted by her apprehension of the future which she tries in vain to shut from her sight. Thus she listens to the voice of the fire:

> Light a few candles thin
> Not to see dusk begin—
>
> And I will send up my light against the beginning of night;
> I'll make the tongs shine,
> Make the red berries fine
> Here in their straggling spray—
> And I'll gild the edge of your book—
> *When night comes, don't look.*

At other times she yields to despair:

> To them that trust the night, the night is kind.
> I only see the meadows going blind. . . .

Lord Juggler reveals Roberta Swartz as having a fine technical mastery. Her technique is used, however, as a means to the end rather than for itself, nor does she attempt to raise the screen of rhetoric and imagery which so many minor poets use to cover a dearth of thought and feeling. Her words are transparent and direct. There is an ingenuity and sincerity in them which reveal a highly gifted poet, and occasional clumsy phrases, such as the description of the earth "Ongoing at a speed profound", do little to detract from the total effect and will probably disappear from her later work.

There is much in *Lord Juggler* that recalls especially three poets of the past: the vividness and purity of Emily Dickinson, the freshness and mystery of Blake, and in such poems as *Sic Transit* and *The Ring Dove* a melancholy which is reminiscent of Keats. Above all there is an individuality which has produced truly distinguished poetry.

LOUIS J. HALLE, JR.

DISCRETIONS *by Frances, Countess of Warwick* (SCRIBNER'S. $3.00)

DUMAS more than once observed that nothing in history engaged his interest so much as anecdotes. It would be surprising if others did not share his view after reading this volume. There is an abundance of really significant anecdotes such as may be seldom achieved in this or any other period of social history. One must indeed search among the celebrated writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—among the Saint-Simons and Marmontels and Madame de Campans—to find a richness of observation, a psychological acuteness, an appreciation of the human texture of things comparable with the talent revealed in these pages.

The Countess of Warwick is an authentic social historian. Her education, her experience of mankind in diverse levels, her very metamorphoses as one whose political creed has run counter to the bias of her class, would lead us to expect shrewdness and incisiveness of style. There is brilliance enough to satisfy the most exacting. The picture of the Countess of Warwick, as rendered by herself, is a candid one. She at least, in this century of cross-currents and all-embracing confusion, has known what she wanted and how to seek it.

Rights and responsibilities go together in the rigorous thoughtfulness of this remarkable lady. There is no page in the book, scarcely a paragraph, which neglects this touchstone of serious judgment.

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King Edward, both as Prince of Wales and as occupant of the Throne, is appealingly shown. His early weaknesses, like those of the Countess herself, are represented less as personal faults than as fortuities of time and circumstance. From Disraeli to Ramsay MacDonald, from Salisbury to Winston Churchill, the near view of political power, its enticements and disillusioning burdens, is sustained. No less are there revealing portraits of the social structure at large. In England, as nowhere else, there has been, still is, a vital political life distributed among country houses, centered in drawing rooms rather than in the committee chambers of Westminster. The Countess of Warwick has played a rôle in this life; and her flashing pen has measured men and events with distinctness. We have here, in truth, the intimate and authoritative record of an important epoch in British social and political history.

ARMAND BURKE

A PICTURE OF AMERICA: THE PHOTO-STORY OF AMERICA—AS IT IS—AND AS IT MIGHT BE *by Charles Cross* (SIMON AND SCHUSTER. $1.50)

APPARENTLY impressed both by the commercial success of *New Russia's Primer* and by the tremendous advances which have recently been made in Germany and other European countries toward the adaptation of motion-picture technique to the telling of a story in still pictures, Mr. Cross and Messrs. Simon and Schuster have attempted an elementary illustrated argument for socialism in America, aimed at the tabloid-loving masses. The argument itself, couched in simple, humourless English, is the familiar oversimplified story of the waste resulting from competitive effort and from a top-heavy distributing system. The photographic comment, which the publishers evidently consider the chief justification for printing the book, seems to us extraordinarily uninspired. The only logical relation set up between successive pictures is one of monotonous contrast; the pictures themselves are undistinguished and in most cases much too small to be effective; layout and typography are both ugly and uninteresting. Judged as a piece of self-confessed socialist propaganda, the book has a certain documentary interest. Judged as America's contribution to the promising new technique of telling a story with the aid of printed photographs, it has almost none.

MARVIN MC CORD LOWES

THE WORLD OF JEAN DE BOSSCHÈRE *by Samuel Putnam* (FORTUNE PRESS. $5.00)

HIERONYMUS BOSCH, the elder Breughel, Baudelaire, Isidore de Lautréamont, Beardsley and the *surréalistes*—certain characteristics of all of them mark the work, in literature and in drawing and painting, of Jean de Bosschère. One might search out further influences (for instance, his coloured illustrations to the *Decameron* are reminiscent of Persian work), but these should serve to indicate his prevailing moods; M. de Bosschère is a Satanist of the Barbey d' Aurevilly type who uses modern "subconscious" methods to depict the insane horrors that engage him. In his prose-poetry these methods—and his subject—inevitably make him something of a bore: today we are sufficiently familiar with words in mad sequence which occasionally express a mad thought to find in them not even the minor enchantment of novelty, and there are perhaps few of us left willing to believe highly personal obscurity is true pro-

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fundity. Purely aesthetic pleasure is in itself not very enduring, and in the strictest sense may not even exist, but any approximations of it are more likely to be achieved in pictorial than in literary art. Rightly or wrongly, we demand meaning of literature, but in drawing we can content ourselves with a line even if it encloses no understandable shape. Aubrey Beardsley, when he drew ugly men and women with a pleasing line, understood this, though it must be remembered that a large part of the intended pleasure in his work is to be had from that same ugliness. In the confused compositions of M. de Bosschère we find pleasure in the great talent with which he pictures this confusion, and, foregoing any evaluation of his ends, we must grant him the perfection of his accomplishment. Mr. Putnam, as his title indicates, is insistent that M. de Bosschère is the creator of a world, which he most certainly is—the creator of a psychopathic world, furnished with the paraphernalia we find in Poe, the French fifties and the English nineties, and so inevitably ridiculous at times to the person who claims nothing more than aspirations toward sanity. Mr. Putnam says that his subject does not owe a great deal to Baudelaire and Beardsley and that his deepest roots are to be found in the old Flemish masters. That M. de Bosschère has not much in common with Baudelaire is true, for what lifts the author of *Flowers of Evil* into the class of great writers is his awareness of sin and the fact that it lures on the sinner not with its sweetness but with appeals to some perverse and congenital appetite for the bitter. As for M. de Bosschère's deeper relationship to Breughel the Elder, does not the old painter picture a world which his Church assured him existed for all men, while the modern artist draws one which, to twist one of his phrases into a vulgar but apt expression, is all done with mirrors? The fact is that Jean de Bosschère is concerned with the same world, and with much the same emotions, as Beardsley, but he has gone into its farthest regions and shown a more varied skill in portraying it for us. If Beardsley seems a larger figure to our eyes, it is because he epitomizes an epoch; the work of M. de Bosschère is of the most personal sort.

So far as one can gather from scrappy chapters modelled, one presumes, on the epistolary style of Ezra Pound, Mr. Putnam considers Jean de Bosschère a genius of universal dimensions. Neither Mr. Putnam's vague and elliptical statements nor any of M. de Bosschère's work (a good many fragments of his writings are translated) in the book gives evidence of this; but unlike the former, the latter is very interesting as a record of an eccentric mind in one of the rare instances when it is united with a talent that is only less rare than these instances. The statement applies to M. de Bosschère's pictorial work rather than to his writings; his prose-poetry is a pastiche of such things as "The madman is an ardent shadow who does not hear you". The best of his literary efforts is *Marthe and the Madman* (published in an English translation in 1929), and this work is eccentric chiefly in its subject matter. The present volume is handsomely printed and bound in an edition of one thousand copies, and contains about one hundred illustrations, many of which have not previously been published, so that it does not need to be read to be enjoyed.

GEOFFREY STONE

EUPALINOS, OR THE ARCHITECT *by Paul Valéry* (OXFORD. $2.75)

IN THE form of a nether-world dialogue between Socrates and Phaedrus, M. Valéry of-

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fers us a cool paean to the joys of constructive thinking and thoughtful construction. His praise is highest for thoughtful construction. In the end, Socrates expresses regret that he devoted his life to the former: "O thoughtful waste of my days!" he cries. Writing of Leonardo, M. Valéry has said that philosophy may be stated in other media than words —by which one takes him to mean, not the commonplace fact that any work of art has a philosophy implicit in it, but that a philosophical system may be built up through artistic efforts. To the person who takes philosophy as the exposition of metaphysical truths, there may not be much sense in this statement; but if one holds philosophy an "austere sport" it becomes comprehensible. This lighter view is not openly expressed in *Eupalinos*, and it may be that M. Valéry has abandoned it, but there is still shown a great love of the athletic side of philosophy. Such a love is not necessarily connected with the foregoing view, and is in itself a more commendable thing. Herr Curtius has called M. Valéry's intellect a sensuous one, and his concern with purity of form and thought—in his verse and in the intellectual pursuits of M. Teste—is well known. These interests seemed to have coalesced in *Eupalinos*, which praises architecture and music (M. Valéry says buildings talk and sing, and so would seem to agree that architecture is frozen music) as the purest of the arts, not "enslaved to real objects". In architecture and music, says Phaedrus, using the Achilles-and-the-tortoise problem as an analogy, "there is no more Achilles and no more tortoise, nor even time nor speed, but numbers alone and numerical relations". The purity of architecture consists in its "miraculous" conformity with the function that it must fulfil, in which, from the point of view of the building itself, principle and construction are inseparable. But, of course, the principle does not naturally reside in the substance worked; the architect imposes form on the shapeless and for a while defies the change of time, making a thing that has a *continuous* existence, unlike, for instance, music or verse which exists for others only when it is played or read. The joy of thoughtful construction is the very understandable one of giving the abstract concrete embodiment by altering the face of Nature in accordance with her own laws.

Eupalinos does not push forward the boundaries of human knowledge, but it does hold an enthusiasm for exercising the intellect that, one hopes, may prove contagious in an age of shoddy thought. It is most appropriate that this book should be written in the form of a Socratic dialogue, for it shows the same delight in using the mind which is one of the chief literary pleasures of Plato. The value of this delight is comparable to the spiritual delights of love, which imbue old knowledge with a freshness and intensity that make the lover feel he has for the first time uncovered a certain aspect of his love. And as love grows more beautiful under discipline and in the end becomes completely free, because it operates only in its proper sphere, so does the use of the mind become more satisfying when it is curbed by the rigours and distinctions that issue from the principles of which it too is an embodiment. Metaphors such as these are almost inevitable in speaking of M. Valéry, since he is a *philosophe* rather than a philosopher, and he propounds no ordered system but conveys to us the neat edge of his *pensées* and the joys of his crystalline world. Crystalline is a word much applied to the workings of the mind, but if we inquire into its connotations, we shall find that it is apposite in speaking of M. Valéry: crystal is sharp but it has its sensuous appeal; it may have numerous

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facets; because it is so transparent, we often forget that it also distorts.

William McCausland Stewart has done the translation of *Eupalinos*; it gives the general impression of a rendering from the Greek, though there are, naturally, "poetical" uses of words which would never have occurred to a Greek mind. This does not mean that Mr. Stewart's work is diluted Jowett; it means that he has succeeded in carrying over from the French his author's "classicism". The edition is limited to seven-hundred and fifty copies and is soberly and handsomely printed.

GEOFFREY STONE

THRUST AT THE SKY *by MacKnight Black* (SIMON & SCHUSTER. $2.00)

Two small volumes are the whole published work of MacKnight Black, and the second one, *Thrust at the Sky*, was left unfinished at his death last summer. The pity of it is great, for though no doubt other poets will profit by the impetus of his work his own poetic development had scarcely more than begun. The long narrative which takes up the greater part of the posthumous volume is a distinct advance over the lyrics in *Machinery* by its more complete mastery of his peculiar idiom. It shows a greater ease and sureness in the imagery and in the more sustained and flexible rhythm. There is an extension of theme and horizon, a greater interest in human problems. Emotionally simple, fairly barbaric, as the situation is, it is curiously in accord with the simplification of the city background. Mr. Black wrote of buildings as the early romantic poets wrote of cliffs and cataracts, and peopled them with creatures even more naïve than the noble savage. But unlike his pantheistic forerunners he shows a quality of defiant brutality which is distinctly modern. Instead of crediting nature with human sensibilities he transfers to man the automatic activities of nature and of his own creations.

RUTH JANET BARBER

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THE NEW NOVELS

Now that most of the novels coming to us out of England are too long by half, it is high praise to say that of the five hundred and sixty-seven closely printed pages of G. B. Stern's *The Rueful Mating* (Knopf. $2.50) three hundred are well worth reading. This is the love story of two child prodigies: an infant poetess, spoiled by her vain, silly mother and by idiotic adulation to such an extent that any later triumph is bound to be an anticlimax, and a boy actor, carrying the responsibilities of a family long before his voice has cracked. The little girl is rescued, almost brutally, by her bluff and hearty father, who carries her off to England after her mother's death in New York, determined to turn her into a healthy, romping child if he kills her; and he very nearly does. Not a single standard from her old life is valid in the new; and the dreadful, thoroughgoing process by which Halcyon Day has her self-confidence knocked out of her makes painful reading. The boy never had any particular conceit of himself; he had been brought up to a topsy-turvy theatrical life, with haphazard schooling and no opportunity to make friends, so the self-pity which nearly wrecks Halcyon is unknown to him. He dreads vaguely the time when he will be too old for child parts, and dreads acutely the bad seasons when engagements are hard to get, but his precociousness is far more a real early maturity than hers. The two little pariahs, strangers through no fault of their own both in the world of children and the world of adults, find each other by chance and fall deeply in love.

Miss Stern does wonders with the situation, never sentimentalizing but never under-rating the children's emotion; the heartbreaking impotence of adolescents in an adult world has seldom been better done. Young Eden on his wedding night, already a little jaded, a little frightened at this new responsibility in a life so full of burdens, yet prematurely tender, is a genuinely tragic character. But Halcyon's education in humility is too long drawn out, too particularized; and there is one horrible, over-done scene with Halcyon's family, who, after the children have spent an innocent night together, will not believe she is still virgin, that should never have been written.

The truth is that no story of children, not even a story of gifted children, can be told at this length without suffering by it. When depth and richness are not immediately at hand, not inherent in the characters and material that the author has chosen, the temptation to fall back on ingenuity and contriving is too great; and that, one suspects, is why *The Rueful Mating* is no real rival to *The Matriarch.*

Every character in the five hundred and fifty pages of Beatrice Kean Seymour's *Maids and Mistresses* (Knopf. $2.50), except for Barbara, a supernumerary baby, is, in one way or another, a martyr to "love". Nevertheless, if you get through the first two sections, in one of which a wife starves her husband except when nature is pushing her to procreation, and in the second of which a husband starves his wife because he was

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crippled in the Great War, you will come at last to the story of Sally, which redeems a rather silly book. The excellence of the last part is all the more surprising in that a shadowy Sally has been in the book from the first (indeed it seems as though heaven had been seeing to it that she should know the worst of love before she was ripe for it herself, putting itself to superhuman shifts to educate a rather stupid and unconvincing little parlour maid). Sally is illegitimate, the daughter of a cockney girl who loved life and a man above her station. Sally's father passed along, leaving his daughter nothing but a pair of shapely, well kept hands that the reader hears about considerably more than once too often, and a native gentility. She goes out to service at fourteen and becomes the very Kohinoor of maids, worshipping her mistresses the other side adoration, and rejecting dishonourable advances like Pamela *rediviva*, but there is no life in her till the last third of the book.

Then, although the first two sections balanced each other with a symmetry too perfect for this earth, and though Sally, who was far too thoroughly nature's gentlewoman to put a keyhole to illegal uses, was always on hand with uncanny regularity whenever there was anything to be learned about the ways of men and women, and although you have long passed the stage of praying to be delivered from the word "love" forever more, the whole book changes and the day is saved. When the author abandons her fictionalized case-reports of mismated lovers and gets down to her true business, she writes movingly and well. Sally herself falls in love with the caddish son of her latest employer, is discharged, robbed of all her money, rescued from suicide, and enters at last into a short period of peace and security. For the sake of this brief idyl alone the book is worth reading. But it is probably too much to hope that Beatrice Kean Seymour may see for herself that she is at a parting of the ways.

News comes from the publishers of Kate O'Brien's *Without My Cloak* (Doubleday, Doran. $2.50) that it has been awarded the James Tait Black Hawthornden prize. Here is a case where a book's length is fully justified by the intricacy and depth of the relations that the author has set herself to explore. The time covered is twenty-five years in the life of three generations of a well-to-do Irish family, and the theme is love between a father and son, so adoring that the boy, Denis, is nearly ruined for want of something to move him to rebellion, to the exercise of his spiritual muscle. The book is so full of characters, of significant episodes, that an older author (this is a first novel) might easily have floundered, but Miss O'Brien tells her story steadily and expertly, and at the same time brings the Irish Victorian period to life.

Her attitude toward the Catholic Church is the current half-hostile libertarian attitude (the book's nearest approach to a villain is a neurotic priest, an uncle of the hero); and Denis's first love is, once again, the illegitimate daughter of a peasant girl and a gentleman, who, as usual, is a little simpler and nobler and more magnanimous than life. But *Without My Cloak* is an excellent book.

Secret Sentence (Doubleday, Doran. $2.00), Vicki Baum's new novel, is the stock story of sin and expiation. The hero-criminal, one of the post-War generation in Germany, a half-starved, feverish, hero-worshipping young radical, kills the Prime Minister, and then fails to kill himself. He escapes, pursued by all the Furies, suffers, becomes purified, realizes that his victim was a good man and

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his hero a demagogue, returns humbly to society as exemplified in a primitive fishing community, and dies sacrificially.

As if this were not bad enough, the dust-jacket, both by the ardent picture it carries and by the text of its flap, promises considerably more erotic excitement than the book supplies. There is, to be sure, an exotic Russian refugee in it, mistress of a capitalist and, clandestinely, mistress of the boy-criminal also. But she exists only to tell the hero that "God loves sinners" and to provide him with money for escape.

So it can be seen that Frau Vicki Baum's bag of tricks contains knick-knacks from all the authors from Dostoievsky to Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth. She can be trite and melodramatic without turning a hair. The result should be, of course, that no book of hers would be worth reading, but the result is nothing of the kind. Her faults are legion and shared with most of the novelists of the past hundred years; her virtues are very much her own. The stupidest story comes to life under her touch, and she has a tenderness for every creature she writes about, warm, maternal and revelatory. But she deserves a whole article, half of praise and half of admonition. In the meanwhile, *Secret Sentence* is not likely to bore you.

Ballerina (Bobbs-Merrill. $2.00) is the first book by Lady Eleanor Smith that I have read. It is great fun: wildly romantic, colourful and exciting. It, too, is peopled by characters out of stock: the woman of genius, her protectors, her one true love, her sinister hunch-backed child; and its situations—early poverty, success, adulation, the threat of age, despair and death—have no breath-taking novelty about them. It has no depth of insight or loveliness of writing, but it has vitality and charm. A good book for a dull day.

DOROTHEA BRANDE

SOFT ANSWERS *by Richard Aldington* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.50)

IN THESE six novelettes there is nothing soft; to the problems raised there are no answers; and on the contrary there is a great deal of wrath. The title would seem indicative of that primitive irony which consists in curling the nose and saying the opposite of what you mean, and this irony is abundantly illustrated in the text. The publishers call Mr. Aldington's style "beautifully light in touch". How light it is may be illustrated by the beginning of *A Gentleman of England*, which has as a motto, "How unjust when Nature gives something wonderful, and Fortune spoils it!" and begins: "We accuse Nature unjustly when we say that she never creates a perfect human being. If Mr. Harold Formby-Pett was not perfect, it was not for lack of thinking so. After several years' experience of himself as an adult, he had no fault to find with himself—at least, he never found one. A wonderful thing, the harmony of Mr. Formby-Pett with himself. . . ." Perhaps we are wrong in thinking that this sort of irony is not light. It is, however, varied by witticisms. One such is found a page or two further on: "An old pal of the great Uncle Harold had found Harold his City job—a sort of drop in a bucket-shop". Here is the light touch with a vengeance.

If we do not admire the style we can nevertheless respect the feeling behind it. Mr. Aldington's mood is one of indignation at mankind. If his tales were not by internal evidence recently written one would suspect them of having been composed in the first

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flush of post-War disillusionment, for they perpetuate its spirit. A bitter ex-soldier, in the last story, seems to sum up the author's feeling when he says: "Material civilisation sometimes makes me think of an enormous herd of hogs, rooting and grubbing up a lovely field of fresh grass and flowers, and then congratulating themselves on their skill and progress". These veterans are exceptions to the author's general indictment, for they are presented sympathetically and the conclusion of the tale is in the mood of tragedy. But the rest of the stories are about people whom the author detests, often justly, indeed, but with such thoroughness that he leaves the reader not the slightest chance to be concerned with what happens to them, except to be mildly pleased when they come to grief. And even as we cannot enjoy that imaginative identification with the action which brings the pleasure of novel reading, we cannot enjoy the pleasures of an objective and comic treatment that come from refinements of implication and wit. Furthermore the shortness of the tales gives no room for cumulative effects. One felt some imaginative concern about the unhappy heroine in *The Colonel's Daughter*, because she was a victim and the author devoted a long novel to her.

But if the tales are disappointing as tales, they may be of interest as moral tracts. It is a commonplace that the English are a moralizing race; and the pre-War generation of devotees of art for art's sake are now in their middle age succumbing to the national spirit and devoting their art to sermonizing. Tract No. 1 of Mr. Aldington's attacks the sin of spineless and lazy self-indulgence. No. 2 inveighs against the modern scarlet woman, rich and nobly born, who uses her sex to vent her hate of mankind and to exercise her lust for domination. She comes to a properly lurid end. (This tale is the moral version of that romantic immorality, *The Green Hat*.) No. 3 is less a morality than a silly parody of a Henry James psychological mystery. No. 4 is a forthright attack on egoism and the sordidness of business. No. 5, by means of a pious hypocrite, attacks those pretended scholars who gain reputation for wisdom by criticizing the works of others and keeping discreet silence otherwise. No. 6 is, as we have said, the exception, in that the three veterans are sympathetically presented. Through their mouths the author expresses without irony his *saeva indignatio*.

He is cynical, bitter, wrathful, but he is not a moral sceptic or relativist. His code is not a Victorian one; it is rather the rough masculine code of the soldier; but it is a code. "This alleged amoralism is just the hog's excuse for his hoggishness", says his veteran. And this code is passionately felt. It is therefore worthy of genuine respect; and we are so far from thinking that art should be separate from morals that we believe a real moral indignation may be the inspirer of great literature. The more pity, then, that Mr. Aldington should use an ironical method for which his outspoken temperament is ill-fitted and which brings him into unfortunate contrast with such masters of irony as Aldous Huxley. One wishes that he would speak out in honest, direct denunciation. His indignation might be genuinely impressive if he did not hide it behind a humour that leers through a horse-collar.

ALAN REYNOLDS THOMPSON

WE BEGIN *by Helen Grace Carlisle* (HARRISON SMITH. $2.50)

MISS CARLISLE in this book (the Book League of America's selection for July) turns to the days of the Pilgrim fathers and offers us a novel that is chiefly interesting as popular

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history. We rate a novel high which contains moving scenes and memorable characters, and there are no very moving scenes in *We Begin* because the characters are neither memorable nor very real. The story begins at the opening of the seventeenth century and, with some exceptions, is told by the people concerned in it. Their manner of telling the story is supposed to reflect the prose style of the time (the time, incidentally, when English prose was at its best), but it is only a *mélange* of faint archaisms and flagrant modern idioms—and the latter would do no style good. But the thought of the characters is decidedly more anachronistic; human nature remains constant, but it nevertheless has its variations, even its aberrations, and the aberrations that Miss Carlisle pictures for us are those of modernism. She even saddles her people with specifically modern virtues; a woman observes that the plague might be averted if so much filth were not thrown among the floor rushes, and a man reflects that God does not kill some so that others may live. The modern caricature of the Puritan as a sex-repressed person who saw evil in all things of the flesh is introduced into the story in the person of Eleazar, who ends on the gallows for having raped a girl whose life he had intended to make the ultimate of purity. Granting that such persons did exist in the Pilgrim community, one cannot see any very good reason for allowing Eleazar a large part in the novel; it throws over the pages an unduly neurotic atmosphere, which cannot be dissipated by making Anne, the Puritan wife, a modern "sensible" woman or by giving an adolescent boy visions of the great American empire to come (this sort of prophecy is surely the worst vice in which a historical novelist can indulge). Eleazar has his use, however, in giving the book a plot.

To praise Miss Carlisle's work only for the factual data it holds is of course a somewhat back-handed compliment; but she has culled from works of history much interesting, though not obscure, material, and this enables her to present the outer lives of the Pilgrims with an accuracy she could not attain in more subtle matters. If one cannot give time to much reading in history, he will gain from *We Begin* a knowledge of the difficulty of practising a dissenting faith in the reign of James I, of the hardships the Pilgrims underwent in their long sojourn in Holland and of the even greater hardships they met in Massachusetts in the form of sickness, the Indians, and the enormous difficulty of establishing a civilization in a wilderness. And if he can overcome a repugnance to Miss Carlisle's bad writing and allow for her other limitations, the knowledge will not be gained at too great a cost.

GEOFFREY STONE

THE LADY OF THE BOAT *by Lady Murasaki* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $3.50)

THIS is the fifth volume of *The Tale of Genji*, a tenth-century Japanese novel relating the affairs of a grandee of that time. When the book opens, Genji has already died, but his shadow still falls on his descendants, with whom the tale moves forward. It is with two of these that *The Lady of the Boat* is chiefly concerned, and more with one than with the other. The person who oftenest holds our attention is Kaoru (really a descendant of Genji only by popular misconception), a man who knows too well how "between the idea and the reality . . . between the desire and the spasm . . . falls the Shadow", and who might be called a Japanese Hamlet. The other person is Prince Niou, the grandson of Genji and the son of the ruling emperor. He is not drawn

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in the same detail as Kaoru; and perhaps he does not require it, for he is a simple, somewhat dissipated but likable young man. The early pages are taken up with the intricacies of Japanese family relationships (and concubinage can make these relationships very intricate indeed) which are perforce boring to the Western reader, who may think the long recital unbalances the book if he forgets the importance of such affairs to the Japanese mind. But once these matters have been made clear, the story moves on its slow and delicate course to reveal happenings of unusual subtlety and beauty. It is difficult to indicate just where this beauty lies; it is held, in a measure, in the strangeness of the life of which Lady Murasaki tells, in the conventions of these highly civilized, almost hyperaesthetic people to whom scents, blossoms and the shapes of the clouds carry so much feeling, who converse partially in poems, original and quoted, who can read a whole character in the brush strokes of handwriting. But that Kaoru is like Hamlet indicates the greater source of the beauty: though we must remember how different are these people's conventions from ours and how their traditions (which are deeper things than conventions) often diverge from ours, yet the hesitant lover of the West does not differ essentially from Kaoru, the persistent virgin from Agemaki, the bewildered girl from Kozeri. Despite the strange and charming perfumes they exude and the exotic blooms they bear in their hands, we recognize these noble people of tenth-century Japan as imbued with the touching timelessness of humanity.

The story is very slight. Kaoru comes upon the two daughters of an exiled Prince, to whom he has gone to study religion. Slowly comes acquaintance with the daughters, then intimacy, then love for one of them. Agemaki does not return his love, but attempts to direct his attentions to her younger sister Kozeri. Kaoru introduces Niou to Kozeri, and she becomes Niou's concubine. Agemaki dies, still refusing Kaoru's love. Kaoru sees Agemaki in Kozeri and tries to win her, but fails in that, just as he had failed with her sister—because he can never bring himself to action sufficiently overt. The book does not come to a decisive close, but hints that Kaoru may go on to seek Agemaki again in the person of a half-sister who has appeared in a distant province.

Arthur Waley's translation is done into very pleasant prose, though one thinks he may have been more modern in his phraseology than was necessary. That, however, is rather a matter of taste than one of a stricter standard, and if we regret such an expression as "you cannot live on air" being substituted for "you cannot live on clouds and mists", we still must applaud his finesse in translating from what is doubtless a very difficult tongue. *The Lady of the Boat* can be read as a novel in itself, but it is likely that those who read it will seek out the preceding volumes and look forward happily to the sixth.

GEOFFREY STONE

ISABEL *by Gerald Gould* (BREWER, WARREN & PUTNAM. $2.00)

ALTHOUGH this is Mr. Gould's first novel, he is already well known to the novel-reading public because of the frequency with which his name appears under commendatory notices on the jackets of others' works. *Isabel* is about two daughters of an upper middle-class family in London; they are Isabel and Rosamund—the first gives away love as ladies once gave away bread (so Mr. Gould tells us), and the second doubly strengthens one of the major traditions of the English novel

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by taking two baths a day. Because no more pursue her, Isabel has four lovers during the course of the novel; one of these lovers she takes in a most dramatic scene in which he points toward her bedroom door and lets her know her brother-in-law is going to be ruined or she is. That is how she acquires her second lover; her first lover she married because he was old, a drunkard and his wife had died twenty years before. But now I recall that Isabel had five lovers—I was forgetting a minor young man she lived with for several weeks. Mr. Gould explains these lovers by the war: when Isabel was a girl during the war and sat dreaming from her window over Hampstead, the war did something to her and thereafter she could refuse no one's advances. Not one of Isabel's lovers understands her, not even the Labour M.P. who takes her to the North Mediterranean. Sister Rosamund marries the son of Isabel's first husband (by his first wife—Mr. Gould is wholesome in tone) and has some babies, whom she presumably trains in the double-bath ritual.

The book also tells about a neurotic young man (he was that way even before the war) who edits a weekly called *Sex and Sense* and later edits a daily with a circulation of two millions. He loves both sisters and becomes Isabel's second lover; he tries to hurt the sisters whenever he can but, they being what they are, has very little success. Then there is a great magnate who is also a mystic and epicure; he marries Isabel and gives people jobs. The penultimate chapter lays the seeds of a great furor, but the furor seems to have been overlooked in the ultimate chapter.

The above exposition was easily enough done; it is more difficult to explain why the outline of a novel should have been put between book covers, especially the outline of this novel. Publishers, in rejecting manuscripts, often advise the novelist to put his work away and forget about it. Mr. Gould's publishers have failed to do this and it devolves upon the reviewer to tell the public that they must assume this pleasant duty.

GEOFFREY STONE

YEAR BEFORE LAST *by Kay Boyle* (HARRISON SMITH. $2.50)

IN MANY respects this is a successful novel. As the last "bubble-rip, bubble-rip, bubble-rip" of the hero's tubercular hemorrhage ripples down the page, the reader is made aware of death and the fact that it is often a physically unpleasant thing. And, because Martin has been made real to him, the reader regrets that a man of thirty should go down to the grave still possessed by the emotions and greeds of a child. Martin was a poet and he edited an expatriate magazine, which was published on the funds supplied by a domineering Scotch aunt. Martin met Hannah at the sidewalk table of a French café, and a little while later he telegraphed her to come to live with him—and this Hannah did very quickly. He was dying of tuberculosis, but he was handsome and spoke in very obscure poetical sentences. He hastened his death by drinking a great deal—a habit which was perhaps an outgrowth of his identification of himself with Poe. Neither Miss Boyle nor her heroine appears to realize the bad effects of his drinking. When his aunt learns that Martin has taken a mistress, she will no longer supply him with money. Aunt Eve is a hard, grasping woman who wants Martin's love all to herself and determines to have it by controlling the means which give Martin his magazine-toy. Denied his plaything, Martin becomes a very petulant little boy indeed and stamps his feet and calls the aunt who has taken his magazine from him

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many naughty names—though every now and then he must become contrite in order to get the money from her by which he and his mistress live. Sometimes he is naughty to his love too and very rudely says he believes she is thinking of her husband and really doesn't love him after all. Martin and Hannah go from hotel to hotel, driven from each by animosity to Martin's racking cough and disposition toward hemorrhages. But Hannah knows that it is not Martin as a personification of death these people fear, but the very living beauty of him which shows them what dull dead creatures they actually are. Martin's tuberculosis gets worse and Aunt Eve grows more and more cruel, till her frustrated love drives her to the extreme of sadism: she proposes to take Martin's magazine-toy and *edit it under her own name.* The story comes to a close shortly after this fiendishness.

Miss Boyle's success is in these things. She has attempted a completely mannered style, that is, one which directs attention on the description rather than the thing described, and she rarely fails to supply the completely unexpected word; even her characters speak in a manner no human being has ever been able to sustain in any lengthy conversation. One might grant her a right to this device if her novel were not in other respects very realistic: the dogs in the story seek out trees a great deal and Martin loses much red blood. However, one can but admit that the distorted prose, with its overtones of the Celtic Renaissance (or is it Twilight?), does not completely hide a sharp observation of sights, sounds and smell and a sensitivity to all the warmth of Southern France. The desired and repulsive effect to be had by saying people talk with their voices or think in their minds is strong in every paragraph, but the people of whom these childish constructions tell can gain nothing more than our contemptuous pity. And there the strained infantilism of the prose is again a success; for we see in it what silly wretches these lovers are—the man crying like a spoiled child for the little magazine of him, begging money from a woman he curses, now and then pulling a leg from the fly he has lured from her husband; the woman entranced by the beauty consumption has given this naughty boy of thirty, hating the poor devil of a husband who pedals a bicycle over Northern France to earn a living, hating the woman who supplies the dying boy with the money which keeps her (not in luxury, it is true). These children in adult bodies are not heroic, and Miss Boyle's novel would have been a better one if she had realized it.

GEOFFREY STONE

CALL HOME THE HEART *by Fielding Burke* (LONGMANS, GREEN. $2.50)

THERE is, I think, a fundamental kinship between this book and Olive Schreiner's great novel, *From Man to Man.* Both novels were written by women and have a woman as protagonist, they share a leisurely pace, and their "messages" are delivered against a background of effective local colour and sound character building. The deeper kinship lies in a certain didactic, questing note, as if the author had said, "It is not enough to tell merely a story, not enough merely to make a character live. I shall make the word flesh, and the flesh shall create and think the word". With Olive Schreiner the word is the rights and suffering of woman; with Fielding Burke, living in the day when feminism has won its battles, the vivifying word is turned upon the mountaineers in field and mill-town. In the mountains the author calls on the love of the native place, and in the

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mill-towns the doctrines of communism are advanced not unfavourably.

The book centers about the strong figure of Ishma Waycaster, an uneducated mountain girl who loves to climb to the high places by herself there to dream of the day when she will go out into the world and learn how to live a fuller life. She marries the man she loves, has a child, and then, despising the life she is leading, although still in love with her husband, runs away with another man. Her life thereafter is compounded of unhappiness, rapid education, and the vision of a communistic industrial order. She is a worker in a strike which bears a strong resemblance to one that had national publicity a few years ago. She observes that "No man in Spindle Hill could support his family on his own wages alone. . . . If a worker came out of his daze between law and church, and questioned it, he was a 'bad influence'". Faced with the suffering of the workers, she asks herself, "Ambition, the burning intellect, the vain reachings out, what meaning could they have if they did not in some way add to human happiness?" Her answer of service reveals a secret to her, the secret of the dreams that lie behind ugly and sordid lives. But her personal quest is not ended. Though she has gained much wisdom and also the ability to help others, she has still to learn her own deepest needs. And with her heart called home the book ends in a way that good communists would deprecate, if they could be so mild.

Perhaps this book should be criticized more harshly. As the synopsis above indicates in bare outline the plot is not ingenious. There are sentimental touches, long vague communings with nature, and in parts an unsure handling of the masses of people involved. Also, there are times when one fears the characters will disintegrate into the straw figures of a propaganda novel. But the fact is that somehow the characters do not disintegrate, and the other faults seem of less importance than they might in many a more artistic piece of work. There is a conviction and a vision behind this author's writing. These are not mountaineers reproduced for the sake of their archaic speech or quaint ideas. Other writers do that better and reap the reward of a small task well done. I do not attempt to call this a great book or to hail the author as another Olive Schreiner. But it does succeed in making a great number of contemporary novels seem petty.

ARCHER WINSTEN

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ABOUT BOOK-COLLECTING

(*Continued from page 296*)

The date of the first edition of this classic is 1588, of which only two copies are known —those in the B. M. and Bodleian. Harriot was in Virginia with Raleigh; and among other interests of his book is its first detailed reference in English to tobacco. Here is his description of the New Found Marvel:

> "There is an herbe which is sowed a part by itselfe & is called by the inhabitants Vppówoc . . . The Spaniardes generally call it *Tobacco*. The leaves therof being dried and brought into powder: they use to take the fume or smoke therof by sucking it through pipes made of claie into their stomache and heade; from whence it purgeth superfluous fleame & other grosse humors, openeth all the pores & passages of the body; by which meanes the use thereof, not only preserveth the body from obstruction; but also if any be, so that they have not beene of too long continuance, in short breaketh them: wherby their bodies are notably preserved in health, & know not many greevious diseases wherewithall wee in England are oftentimes afflicted. This Vppówoc is of so precious estimation amongest them, that they thinke their gods are marvelously delighted therwith: Wherupon sometime they make hallowed fires & cast some of the pouder therein for a sacrifice. . . ."

So now Phyllis and Granma know what happens when they make hallowed fires with their cigarettes.

* * *

Copies of Harriot's *Briefe and True Report* have realized in the past $7,000 and $7,500; but these were very fine specimens, whereas the more recent one, although in good condition, lacked one of the plates and an imprint leaf, and was not such a tall copy. In the same sale at Christie's, a tall, fine copy of the Second Folio Shakespeare sold for $1,500, compared with $2,300 at Sotheby's a year ago; and $5,000 during the "peak" period. These are big differences, it is true; but they are only temporary. The Folio Shakespeares are certain to find, and probably exceed, even their "peak" levels reached during the "boom" period.

It was the sale, at Sotheby's, of the collection of Thomas Carlyle relics that yielded to American buyers some desirable acquisitions. The collection was sold by order of the executors of Alexander Carlyle, the author's nephew; and a few of the more personal relics were secured by members of the Carlyle family who formed a little isolated group, ignoring the great Thomas's advice to his readers to "forget the learned babble of the sale-room". Indeed, throughout the well-attended sale there was a lively interest. The chief item was a copy of the very rare offprint of *Sartor Resartus* from *Fraser's Magazine*, of which 58 copies were issued four years before the publication of the work in book form. It was the presentation copy from Carlyle to his wife—"This little book, little milestone in a desolate, confused, yet not (as we hope) unblessed Pilgrimage we make in common. . . ." The little milestone sold for $1,350. An unpublished Carlyle MS, descriptive of a journey to Germany in 1858 for the purpose of fixing in his mind the aspect of Frederick the Great's battlefields, was secured by Mr. Gabriel Wells for $550; autograph MSS relating to the *Life* of Cromwell were cheap at $300—including, as they did, 16 sheets of unused material, and a notebook of Carlyle's; while another fascinating item comprized twelve long letters from Edward Fitzgerald to Carlyle giving a full account of his labours at historic Naseby when he was making researches to assist Carlyle with the *Cromwell*, the letters being accompanied by six panoramic water-colour

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sketches made by Fitzgerald. This realized $800. Of course, there were many presentation copies and autograph letters written to Carlyle. One from Thackeray, with a pen-and-ink sketch of himself as a tightrope walker, brought $350; nine from Leigh Hunt, $150; one from Dickens on behalf of a god-daughter of Samuel Johnson, $130—such as these were excellent buying in every way.

* * *

Mention of autograph letters prompts a note of six, covering eleven pages, from John Wesley to his intimate friend Thomas Rankin in Philadelphia and New York (March to Aug., 1775), which changed ownership at $800. Rankin was sent to America to reform Methodism there; and the letters to him contain important references to the disputes between England and America—"Since ye sword is drawn, and 'tis well if they have not on both sides thrown away the scabbard. What will the end of these things be, either in Europe or America. . . ." Poor worried Wesley!

The most important sale of the season was that of 32 magnificent illuminated MSS from the Chester Beatty collection, yielding a total of $115,000 although there was little American competition in this case. Here the prices also showed some heavy reductions—as for example, $7,500 for the famous "Mostyn Gospel" MS, which cost Mr. Chester Beatty $12,500. On the other hand, the three-volume Antiphoner of the Abbey of Beaufré, which formerly belonged to Ruskin, brought $9,000, as against $7,500 its previous price. The record for the sale was $25,000 for a beautiful Book of Hours (*c.* 1445) which had belonged to the daughter of Gil de Raiz, the traditional Bluebeard of the nursery story.

BURTON, JUN.

Note: All prices are given in the dollar at par.

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